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ABSTRACT

This handbook, which is intended for tutors, disability practitioners, and others working with adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities, contains supplementary materials for and about supporting literacy for people with intellectual/developmental challenges. The handbook is a product of the following activities: extensive research of the existing literature; discussion and exchange with literacy experts, practitioners, and some learners; and input from pilot agencies delivering literacy programming in Canada. The following topics are examined in sections 1-6: (1) significance of the handbook; (2) intellectually/developmentally challenged learners; (3) keys to success; (4) advice to tutors; (5) assessment; and (6) literacy activities. Section 7 offers recommendations regarding advocating for disabled learners and related topics. Section 8 contains acknowledgments, and Section 9 contains the following additional readings: "A Literacy Bill of Rights" (David E. Yoder, Karen A. Erickson, David A. Koppenhaver); "A Charter of Rights" (drafted by an unnamed group of developmentally disabled learners); "Get Your Message Across" (Janet Pringle); "Paving Our Road to

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Inclusion: Directions 2000" (Cindy Crichton); "What Do You See When You See Me?" (Carla Roppel); "Creating the Landscape for Inclusion: Directions '99"; and "How I Got into Literacy" (Marlene Dray). Section 10 is an annotated bibliography that lists 84 publications, Web sites, online documents, and computer software titles. (MN)

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SARC

SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION
OF REHABILITATION CENTRES

Supplementary Tutor Handbook

Supporting Literacy for People with Intellectual / Developmental Challenges

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R. Lockert

Prepared by:
Richard Lockert, Resource Developer
Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres

July 2000

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SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION
OF REHABILITATION CENTRES

Supplementary Tutor Handbook

Supporting Literacy for People with Intellectual / Developmental Challenges

Prepared by:
Richard Lockert, Resource Developer
Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres

July 2000

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SARC SUPPLEMENTARY TUTOR HANDBOOK:
Supporting Literacy for Persons with Intellectual / Developmental Challenges

The Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC) gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), in partnership with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (SPSEST). Additional funding was provided by the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation (SLF), in partnership with SaskEnergy. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of any of these sponsoring organizations.

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This document will soon be available online on the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) web site at
http://www.nald.ca

The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. (NALD) is a federally incorporated, non-profit service organization which fills the crucial need for a single-source, comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible database of adult literacy programs, resources, services and activities across Canada. It also links with other services and databases in North America and overseas.

SARC
SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION CENTRES

SARC: Formed in 1968, the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC) is a non-profit, provincial association of 62 independent and autonomous agencies that serve over 4,000 persons with disabilities. Our Member and Associate Member agencies provide residential, rehabilitation, developmental and employment services. SARC, in turn, provides these agencies with policy development, marketing, training, benefits management, labour relations, standards and accreditation, lobbying support, and other services.

Mission: To offer vision, leadership and support to its Members in the pursuit of excellence in community services for individuals with disabilities.

Philosophy: SARC's philosophy is based on respect, integrity, and responsibility of both its Members and individuals served. We listen, learn, and lead together.

Values: SARC believes in:

- The inherent rights and dignity of all individuals
- The freedom of choice of each individual
- The empowerment of individuals with disabilities
- Mutual respect and cooperation among autonomous Member organizations
- Providing opportunities for growth and development
- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Services that are efficient, effective, responsive to, and valued by its Members

SARCAN: The 71 SARCAN depots throughout Saskatchewan provide a comprehensive collection, processing and marketing system to recycle most ready-to-serve beverage containers. Around 80% (~365) of the employees of SARCAN, the recycling division of SARC, are persons with disabilities. SARC Member Centres operate over half of the province's SARCAN depots in their home communities.

SARCAN RECYCLING
A DIVISION OF THE SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION CENTRES

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Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Preface

The Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC) developed the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* to be a useful reference guide for people working with adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities: volunteer tutors working one-on-one with learners through mainstream literacy programs, and disability practitioners delivering programs in group homes, rehabilitation centres, sheltered workshops, day programs and so on.

As the title suggests, it is meant to supplement other types of training for volunteer literacy tutors.

The philosophy that serves as the foundation for *the SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*, as articulated by Lisa Marie Bossert, Alberta Provincial Coordinator for Frontier College, is this:

> "There is no big mystery to tutoring someone with different needs. It's all the same. People learn to read the same. But here are some things that can help."

What's Inside?

This *Handbook* is the product of extensive research of the existing literature, discussion and exchange with literacy experts, practitioners, and some learners, and input from pilot agencies delivering literacy programming.

Whenever possible, learners' words and the words of experienced practitioners are used in this *Handbook*.

It is intended to be a compilation of "the best of the best" available.

"I have gathered a posie of other men's flowers, and nothing but the thread that binds them is mine own."

John Bartlett

John Bartlett. *Familiar Quotations*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1901.

There are ten sections in the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*. Each one is described in detail at its beginning. It is produced in a three-ring binder format so that the tabbed sections can be resorted, added to, or removed, as needed.

This Introduction section features information on:

- The wider literacy strategy of the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC);
- The reasons for creating the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*;
- Appropriate definitions of literacy;
- The many benefits literacy instruction can have on the lives of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. This emphasizes the importance of tutoring, as well; and
- How to make the best use of this *Handbook*.

"Multiworks Vocational Corporation provides residential, vocational and employment opportunities for adults with mental and physical disabilities in Northwest Saskatchewan. One of our primary goals is to increase the independence of our Program Participants, and literacy is one of the major hurdles a lot of these individuals face."

Jocelyn Schindel, Executive Director

Multiworks Vocational Corporation, Meadow Lake, SK

I hope that the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* offers you some insight into and perspective on tutoring adults labelled as having intellectual / developmental disabilities.

In working with this learner population, you will begin to realize that, despite the challenges, so much can be accomplished.

This *Handbook* can be part of providing learning opportunities, and will reinforce your abilities and confidence in working with a special needs learner.

Richard Lockert
July 2000
Saskatoon

"Literacy and numeracy are critical to independent living for all persons in our community. As well as being a functional necessity today, everyone should be able to experience the joys of sinking into a good book or reading to their children."

Jeanne Remenda, Executive Director
Saskatoon Association for Community Living, Saskatoon, SK

1.2 SARC and Literacy

In early 1998, SARC developed a three-phase strategy to attempt to address the literacy needs of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities in Saskatchewan. Three projects have been developed as part of the strategy: the SARC Literacy Needs Project, the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, and the SARC Literacy Training & Support Project.

Primary funding for these projects came from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), demonstrating its commitment to assist community organizations whose programs serve people having lower literacy skills. Supplementary funding was received from the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation (SLF), the primary literacy fundraiser in this province.

The SARC Literacy Needs Project

This project ran from October 1998 to July 1999. SARC initiated the project to assess and begin to address literacy needs of people with intellectual / developmental (and other) disabilities, the population primarily served by its Member and Associate Member agencies.

The main project objectives were to:

- Assess literacy needs;
- Identify existing barriers to literacy;
- Research and catalogue appropriate literacy materials and resources;
- Purchase appropriate literacy materials and resources for a modest *SARC / SARCAN Literacy Resource Centre* collection;
- Promote literacy opportunities for people with disabilities in Saskatchewan; and
- Hold literacy presentations to raise awareness and to exchange information (November 1998 and June 1999).

The Needs Assessment component for Saskatchewan was primarily based on surveys distributed to SARC Member and Associate Member agencies and SARCAN depots, as well as to branches of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living. Over two hundred surveys were also distributed nationally to disability organizations, with the intention of obtaining leads on appropriate resource materials.

In November 1998, a workshop entitled "Literacy for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities" was held at the SARC Fall Conference. The invited speaker, Lee Tavares-Jakubec, is the Coordinator / Facilitator of the Agassiz Independent Learning Centre (Beausejour, MB) and the Springfield Literacy Project (Dugald, MB). She led a very informative session.

In June 1999, another literacy presentation was held at the SARC Annual General Meeting and Conference. The program called "Painting with All the Colours of the Rainbow" featured speakers addressing the topics of The Spirit, The Mind, and The Body. The panel discussion for the topic of The Mind focused on the role of literacy in the lives of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The panelists were Richard Lockert, SARC Resource Developer, Sandra Busch, a self-advocate / learner from Manitoba, and Lee Tavares-Jakubec.

Several of SARC Member and Associate Member agencies have been borrowing and using some of the sample materials purchased for SARC's collection.

This project also included the development of a resource catalogue called "Inclusive Literacy: Annotated Listing of Resources Appropriate for Learners with Intellectual / Developmental Challenges."

The SARC Support Inclusion! Literacy Project

This project ran from September 1999 to July 2000. The goal of the **SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project** was to develop and test tutor training resources and strategies that have the potential to increase literacy-building opportunities for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities in Saskatchewan. The project made use of research from the *SARC Literacy Needs Project.*

The main project activities were to:

- Increase awareness of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities in Saskatchewan;
- Produce and pilot test a *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*;
- Compile a comprehensive Tutor Training Resource Listing;
- Distribute Resource Packages to literacy programs across Saskatchewan to assist them in becoming more inclusive;
- Develop and pilot test a Supported Literacy Training Delivery Model;
- Establish an informal Consultation Network of literacy experts to provide input into the development of materials;
- Offer in-service training sessions to both Regina Public Library and READ Saskatoon tutors and literacy staff; and
- Hold a presentation on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities at the 2000 SARC AGM and Conference.

Resource materials on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities were compiled and included in the Tutor Training Resource Listing.

These resource materials were very valuable in the ongoing production of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*, the main product of this project. Input received from pilot sites and a Consultation Network proved extremely valuable, as well.

Resource Packages were distributed to Saskatchewan literacy practitioners in October 1999. These materials were designed to assist programs to better meet the literacy needs of the project's target learner population.

The first in-service training session for tutors was completed in Regina in January 2000. The second was held in Saskatoon in March 2000. These sessions were valuable opportunities to receive input and to share information.

In a literacy session held on June 2 at the 2000 SARC Annual General Meeting and Conference, Cindy Crichton of Olds, Alberta spoke about her experiences in the rehabilitation and literacy fields, particularly her success with Reader's Theatre.

The SARC Literacy Training & Support Project

The Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, through its upcoming *SARC Literacy Training & Support Project*, plans to organize and hold a day-long Issues Workshop on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. SARC will also develop and deliver a series of six Regional Workshops to assist tutors / instructors working with this learner population. Finally, SARC will develop a literacy activity handbook to complement this *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*. This project will run from September 2000 to June 2001.

The main project activities are to:

- Increase awareness of the literacy needs of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities across Saskatchewan;
- Produce and pilot the *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook*;
- Organize and hold an Issues Workshop on literacy issues for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities, including a preliminary Discussion Paper and a post-event Summary Report;
- Develop and hold six Regional Workshops on effective teaching strategies and activities;
- Distribute resource packages to literacy programs throughout Saskatchewan to assist them in becoming more inclusive;
- Communicate with an established Consultation Network on project issues and products; and
- Hold a presentation on literacy at SARC's 2001 AGM and Conference.

The Issues Workshop, to be held October 26, 2000 as part of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's regular meetings, will be an opportunity to bring together the literacy and disability communities. The goal of the event is to raise awareness of the issues connected to literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Opportunities for the two groups to discuss concerns, possible solutions, and future cooperation will be provided.

Dr. Glenn Yates, the session facilitator, has conducted a similar event for the Tri-County Literacy Network in Ontario. A preliminary Discussion Paper and an after-the-fact Summary Paper will complement the Issues Workshop.

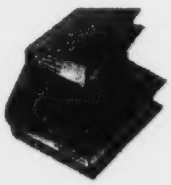
The six Regional Workshops will provide training to individuals and agencies that are interested in expanding literacy options available to adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The Regional Workshops will be based largely on the Issues Workshop, the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* and the *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook*.

The *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook*, the main product of this project, encompasses all research completed in the first two projects. Input from the existing Consultation Network and from two Demonstration Sites will contribute to the production of the *Handbook*.

Another package of appropriate learning / teaching materials will be distributed to the major provincial literacy providers in Saskatchewan.

The presentation at the SARC 2001 Annual General Meeting and Conference will be another opportunity to share information on literacy.

SARC applauds the efforts being made in both the literacy and disability communities to assist adults in building their literacy skills. It is hoped that SARC's literacy projects will ultimately assist current and future efforts.



1.3 Rationales

The primary rationales for developing the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* are: need, best practices, and capability.

Need

- Compared to the general population, a much larger portion of people deemed to be intellectually or developmentally disabled has lower literacy skills.
- The importance of addressing the particular literacy needs of adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities has been identified in several formal and informal needs assessment studies.
- On November 15 and 16, 1999, 30 literacy coordinators from across Saskatchewan attended a planning meeting sponsored by the National Literacy Secretariat. One recommendation was to "encourage and train other community living and rehabilitation agencies to provide their own literacy tutoring."
- Volunteer tutors often feel a general lack of expertise in serving adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

> "Without specific training in providing literacy tutoring to this target population, ... volunteer tutors often feel unqualified and lack the confidence to work with these learners."
>
> - Kimberley Onclin, READ Saskatoon

Best Practices

The *Best Program Practices Information Handout*, produced by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, states:

- "A quality Saskatchewan literacy program respects the differences and is accessible to the broadest range of prospective learners in the community."
- "A quality Saskatchewan adult literacy program places a priority on training for program staff – both paid and voluntary."

A Literacy Bill of Rights for people with disabilities, developed by the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (Duke University, Durham, NC), includes:

- "All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic right to use print."
- All persons should have the "right to have teachers and other service providers who are knowledgeable about literacy instruction methods and principles."

"*Best Practices in Literacy for Developmental Disabilities* makes it clear that barriers preventing adults with developmental disabilities from participating in literacy services can be overcome."

-- Literacy Ontario

Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities, Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998.

Capability

- Most literacy programs do not always have the economic means to purchase enough of the resource materials they need, especially those which focus on a specific population of literacy learners.
- Most literacy programs do not have the time to research and produce such resource materials.

"The literacy organizations do not have the resources to solve the literacy problems of Canada. By supporting non-literacy organizations to include literacy on their agenda, with their expertise in dealing with those client groups, they can meet those needs."

-- Yvette Souque
Program Consultant, National Literacy Secretariat
Speaking at the *Beyond Words - The Power of Inclusion* Conference held in Winnipeg, MB in September 1995.

1.4 Definitions of Literacy

The Roeher Institute has put forth the following definition of literacy:

- "To be literate is to have status, respect and accommodation from others; to have skills in communication (verbal, written, sign, gestural or other language); and to have access to the information and technologies that make possible self-determined participation in the communication processes of one's communities and broader society."

– Roeher Institute
Literacy, Disability and Communication: Making the Connection
Toronto: L'Institut Roeher Institute, 1999, p. vii

Literacy is about learning skills, but also about accommodating existing skills to make communication easier. These communication skills are a key to wider community participation.

- "Literacy is more than learning to read, write and spell proficiently. It is learning to enjoy words and stories when someone else is reading them. It is learning to love books and all the worlds that can be opened by books. It is a way of achieving social closeness through sharing literacy experiences with friends or classmates. It is finding out about the way things are in places we have never visited or in places that have never existed. If we understand that literacy is all of these things and more, we can also understand that everyone can achieve some degree of literacy if given opportunities and exposure... . The notions that children [and adults] are too physically, too cognitively or too communicatively disabled to benefit from experiences with written language are not supported by current emergent literacy research!"

– Pat Miranda, Ph.D.
Quoted in: Peggy A. Locke and Roxanne Butterfield,
"Promoting Literacy for Individuals with Severe to Moderate Disabilities"
(CSUN 1999 Conference Proceedings)
http://www.dinf.org/csun_99/session0038.html

A broad definition of literacy is appropriate when considering learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

1.5 Benefits to Learners

Improving upon limited literacy skills can be a particularly meaningful experience for adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Literacy for this population is essential for many reasons.

BENEFITS

- Learners see the positive impact improving their literacy skills has made on their lives. They feel extremely positive about being in literacy programs.
- People with intellectual / developmental disabilities are more readily accepted by their peers when they are literate.
- Increased competency in literacy is linked with increased expectations and opportunities for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.
- Critical thinking skills can be improved through building literacy skills. Adults with developmental disabilities are better able to become effective self-advocates and active citizens.

- Employment possibilities increase with improved literacy skills. However, obtaining employment may not be possible or easy for all with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Boosting literacy skills and self-esteem do make community living easier and potentially more successful.

Adapted from:
Literacy Ontario, *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998; David A. Koppenhaver and Karen A. Erickson, *Literacy Strategies and Materials for Adolescents and Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Workshop sponsored by the New Hampshire Department of Education and the Institute on Disability / UAP, University of New Hampshire (Manchester, NH), October 27-28, 1994.

Self-Advocacy

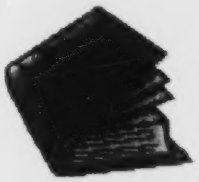
The exchange below illustrates a very important benefit of literacy instruction – enabling the learner to better practice self-advocacy. In this way, literacy can be a means to empowerment.

"One [benefit] that I find important for people is self-advocacy and being able to stand up for themselves in situations at the bank, when they're going to get health care, when they're looking for forms. So just feeling powerful enough to know what they need and expect it the way everybody else does, expect to be able to get their needs met by a variety of different services."

Lisa Marie Bossert, Provincial Coordinator
Frontier College, Edmonton, AB

"I have a success story that goes with that.... One of the people who works with me and has worked on various other projects as well, a woman with a developmental disability, was refused help one time on our city transit system. She called for the elevator because she couldn't manage the stairs and the security person refused to send it down to her because he said she didn't look disabled. So she analyzed this and wrote a letter to Calgary Transit and got an apology and visit and various other things happened. Boy, did that ever make her feel good!"

Janet Pringle, Plain Language Coordinator
Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI), Calgary, AB



1.6 How to Use This *Handbook*

The *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* can be used independently by a practising tutor. It can also form the basis of supplemental tutor training.

Use by Tutors

SARC assumes that the people using this *Handbook* will have already taken some form of literacy tutor training in their community. The information in these pages will supplement and provide focus for many of the topics covered in that initial training.

Some features related to tutor use:

- The Learners section of this *Handbook* gives the new tutor some perspectives on learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Each learner is an individual, of course. It may be helpful to review this section once the tutor gets to know more about the learner he or she is working with. Since knowing the learner is essential, this section complements the Assessment section of this *Handbook*.
- The information in the Advice to Tutors section is immediately helpful to the tutor, and should be reviewed often.
- The Assessment and Literacy Activities sections of this *Handbook* give detailed information specific to learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities, and should complement the information learned in initial training.
- The Readings section of the *Handbook* gives additional perspectives on the topics and issues.

Training

The *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* is one resource for tutor training. It was never intended to be a complete tutor training package. Rather, this *Handbook* is most useful to those who have already taken regular tutor training from a local literacy organization.

The *Handbook* includes the main topics that should be covered in tutor training for those working with this learner population, including awareness, advice to tutors, assessment, literacy activities, and sources of further information. These manageable segments can be mixed and matched depending on what the trainer wants or needs to emphasize.

Some features related to training:

- The Readings section gives additional information related to the topics covered in the main body of this *Handbook*. The relevant spot in the main text where a particular reading would be helpful is noted. These readings can also be used as handouts for training events.
- Many of the pages of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* can be easily made into overheads, which would supplement a tutor training session. It is recommended that learners with an intellectual / developmental disabilities share their ideas with the training tutors. However, if learners are unable to participate in the training process, the written words of learners can be shown on overhead.
- Several of the videos mentioned in the Awareness and Literacy segments of the Bibliography section of this *Handbook* are appropriate to be shown at tutor training events.
- The Awareness Exercises segment provided in The Learner section of this *Handbook* enables training participants to understand some of the learning challenges faced by adult learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

The following entries in the Bibliography section of this *Handbook* specifically discuss ideas for training tutors who will be working with adult learners with disabilities:

- Christina E. van Kraayenoord (Ed.). *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities*. Brisbane: Fred and Eleanor Schonnell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992.
- Judy Calvin and Kerry Duffy. *A Community Handbook on Developing a Literacy and Disability Awareness Training Program*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC), 1994.
- Karen Dean, Laura Sargent and Sandra Shaffer. *We're SOLD: Strategies for Overcoming Learning Differences*. Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools, Adult and Community Education, Spring, 1993.
- Literacy Council of Lincoln. *Training Manual for Tutors of Developmentally-Challenged Adults*. Beamsville, ON: Literacy Council of Lincoln, September 1994.
- Roeher Institute. *Speaking of Equality – Making Literacy Programs Accessible to People with an Intellectual Disability: A Guide for Program Managers and Coordinators*. Toronto: Roeher Institute, 1995.
- Shelby McClintock. *Special Needs Training: Trainer Handbook for Volunteer Tutor Trainers*. State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

The information provided in the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* can also be integrated into the training programs described in the above documents. Together, this information can assist existing programs to be more inclusive of learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Section 2

The Learners

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Section 2

The Learners

2.1 Introduction

To work effectively with a literacy learner, the tutor must learn as much about that person as possible. Literacy instruction is more effective if it is learner-centred, which means that it is focused on the life experiences, self-determined needs, and individual abilities of the learner. All adults should always be in control of their own learning. It should relate to them, since this builds self-esteem and helps them maintain interest.

Information is power. The information in these pages can increase the knowledge, confidence, understanding and the comfort levels of tutors working with an adult with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Features

The Learners section of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* features:

- Several different definitions of intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities;
- A listing of important facts about people with these disabilities, including information related to education and literacy;
- Different exercises on disability awareness. They will help you to better understand some of the learning challenges faced by adult learners with intellectual / developmental disability.
- An extensive listing of learner characteristics, compiled from many sources. Thinking about these characteristics when working with your learner may help you understand her or him better.
- Words of learners with intellectual /developmental disabilities describing themselves and their literacy building experiences.

Further Resources

Some entries in the Readings section of this *Handbook* may give greater insight into people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

In particular, 'A Literacy Bill of Rights' and 'A Charter of Rights' explain some of the equality and human rights issues that come into play. 'What Do You See When You See Me?" introduces an adult learner, and challenges the way we may relate to people who may be different in some ways from ourselves.

Please also see the 'Awareness' and 'Literacy' segments of the Bibliography section of this *Handbook*. Several of the resources listed show the everyday lives and struggles of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The books and videos are eye opening, challenging, and often inspirational.

2.2 Definitions

SARC does not endorse the use of labels; however, it is necessary to define and understand our target learner population, to better work with them to address their particular learning needs. Professionals in the field and legislators have accepted the definitions below. Although detailed and somewhat technical, the definitions may help literacy tutors to better understand learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities, the target learner population for the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*.

DEFINITIONS

Intellectual Disability

- "An intellectual disability is an impaired ability to learn. It sometimes causes difficulty in coping with the demands of daily life. It is a condition which is usually present from birth, and it is not the same as mental or psychiatric illness."

  – Canadian Association for Community Living
  http://www.cacl.ca/english/What.htm

- "An intellectual disability, sometimes called a mental handicap, is a label. A person who has this label is someone who has impaired learning ability and may have difficulty adapting to some of the demands of daily life."

  – Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
  "Questions and Answers" Fact Sheet

- "People with an intellectual disability have an intellectual or perceptual impairment that means they master basic and social skills more slowly. Individuals with this impairment may require particular supports and resources in order to be included and participate fully in literacy programs. Some individuals may also have motor or sensory impairments that require accommodation."

  – The Roeher Institute
  Speaking of Equality: Making Literacy Programs Accessible to People with an Intellectual Disability – A Guide for Program Managers and Coordinators. North York, ON: The Roeher Institute, 1995, pp. 5-7.

Intellectual disabilities can be divided into three "categories." Some cautious generalizations about learning can also be made.

MILD

- 88% of people with an intellectual disability (the vast majority) fall into this category.

  People with a mild intellectual disability may just seem slower than the rest of their class in schoolwork and learning. They are able to take care of their personal needs and have the communication skills necessary for independent living or at least semi-independent living.

MODERATE

- 7% of people with an intellectual disability fall into this category.

  People with moderate intellectual disabilities may learn to talk, to read and write a little, to travel independently and to manage their activities of daily living, given appropriate training, education and life experience.

SEVERE

- 4% of people with an intellectual disability fall into this category.

  These individuals may learn to talk in simple sentences and may reach independence in dressing, eating and otherwise caring for their own physical needs. They may also learn to read a few words or symbols.

Source:
Ability Incorporated [http://www.ucaqld.com.au/disability/id.html]

Developmental Disability

- "The term developmental disability means a severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:

  1. is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
  2. is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
  3. is likely to continue indefinitely;
  4. results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency; and
  5. reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated,

  except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age 5, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided."

– Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 1994
American Association of University Affiliated Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
http://www.aauap.org/DD.HTM

- "A developmental disability is a long-term condition that significantly delays or limits mental or physical development and substantially interferes with such life activities as self-care, communication, learning, decision-making, capacity for independent living, and mobility. It is usually diagnosed before a person reaches age 22."

  – Missouri Department of Mental Health
  Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD)
  http://www.modmh.state.mo.us/mrdd/mrddfacts.html

- "Persons with developmental disabilities may experience slow intellectual development in areas such as learning, reasoning, and memory. Developmental disabilities are caused by conditions that hinder or interfere with the developing brain before, during, or shortly after birth, or in early childhood. In most cases, the precise cause of the disability cannot be identified, although there are clear linkages to maternal infections during pregnancy, the consumption of toxic substances by the pregnant mother, premature childbirth, infections during infancy, and genetic defects. Some developmental disabilities are visible, such as Down's Syndrome, while others may not be obvious."

  – Treasury Board Secretariat
  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TB_852/DEVELOP_e.html

Very often, intellectual / developmental disabilities are confused with other "conditions," such as mental illness or learning disabilities. The following chart should help to clarify these terms.

Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities	Mental Illness	Learning Disabilities
Involves slower than average ability to learn and to process information.	Involves a person's thought processes, perception, orientation, memory, moods, and emotions.	Involves difficulty perceiving, understanding, and/or using concepts through verbal language or non-verbal means.
A variety of "disorders," including mental retardation and autism, which directly affects learning.	A variety of "disorders," including schizophrenia and depression, which indirectly, but seriously, affects learning.	A variety of "disorders," including dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, which directly affects learning.
People with intellectual disabilities are said to have below average intellectual functioning.	People with mental illness can have below average, average, or above average intellectual functioning.	Learning disabilities may affect those with potentially average, average, or above average intelligence.
Most often occur before a person reaches adulthood and continue indefinitely.	Can occur at any time in a person's life and need not continue indefinitely.	Are intrinsic to the individual prior to adulthood and continue indefinitely.

The summaries above are derived from many sources. As such, experts in the different fields may hotly contest some of the entries in this chart.

2.3 Some Facts

Although it is often difficult to make generalizations about people with intellectual / developmental disabilities, here are some important facts.

FACTS

- People with intellectual disabilities comprise the largest group of people with disabilities.
- One estimate is that 899, 000 Canadians have an intellectual disability.
- One in five Canadians are involved with someone who has an intellectual disability – as a friend, a family member, a neighbour or associate.

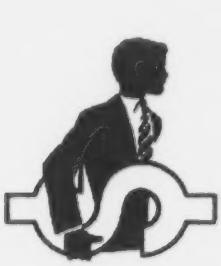
1 in 5

- 3 out of every 100 children are born with an intellectual disability to some extent.
- There are more than 200 known causes of intellectual disabilities, including environmental conditions, childhood illnesses, brain injuries, poisons, and genetic conditions. There are also many unknown causes.

- Males are more likely than females to be diagnosed with a developmental disability.
- Over 300, 000 Canadians with disabilities of working age say their reading skills are not adequate for their daily needs.

- An intellectual or developmental disability is not the same as a mental / psychiatric illness.
- 66% of people between 15 and 64 years of age with an intellectual disability have less than a Grade 9 education.
- Less than one-third of people with intellectual disabilities had jobs in 1991.
- It is estimated that 29 out of every 30 people with an intellectual disability can grow into contributing, primarily self-sufficient members of the community with some assistance.

- Over 50% of all working-age adults with intellectual disabilities are not a part of the mainstream labour force.
- 80% of all adults with an intellectual disability have annual incomes below $7, 000.



Sources:
Ability Incorporated [http://www.ucaqld.com.au/disability/id.html]; Toward Independence, Inc. [http://www.towardindependence.org/disable.htm]; Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) [http://www.cacl.ca/]; The Roeher Institute, *Speaking of Equality: Making Literacy Programs Accessible to People with an Intellectual Disability – A Guide for Program Managers and Coordinators*, North York: The Roeher Institute, 1995; Saskatchewan Association for Community Living; Best Buddies Canada.

2.4 Awareness Exercises

It is important to appreciate the learning difficulties / differences for someone with an intellectual / developmental disability.

EXERCISES

Two Syllable Words

Discussion: People with intellectual / developmental disabilities often have greater difficulty in expressing themselves and in processing information than most people.

Activity: Write a sentence about anything. Then very quickly re-write the sentence to say the same thing, this time using two-syllable words only.

Examples: She mixed milk, whipped cream, and raspberries into her friend's new food processor.

Tracy combined dairy products, added many berries into Andy's mixer.

He walked and walked in the deep pond.

Brother waded further into deeper water.

Reflection: How would it be if you had to work this hard all of the time at whatever you were doing?

Too Many Directions:

Discussion: People with intellectual / developmental disabilities sometimes find it very confusing to follow directions.

Activity: Have someone create a list of twelve random, non-related directions, perhaps involving simple body movements. Read the list once, cover your paper, and follow the directions in order.

Example:

1. Stand up.
2. Put your hands on your shoulders.
3. Turn around.
4. Look at your toes.
5. Jump on the spot seven times.
6. Count to ten.
7. Shake your head.
8. Raise your right foot then put it down.
9. Sit down.
10. Look at your fingers.
11. Cross your right leg over your left leg.
12. Smile.

Listing a series of steps for a folk dance is an effective example as well.

Reflection: How do you feel trying to remember everything?

How would you feel if every time someone told you to do something, you had to follow that many directions?

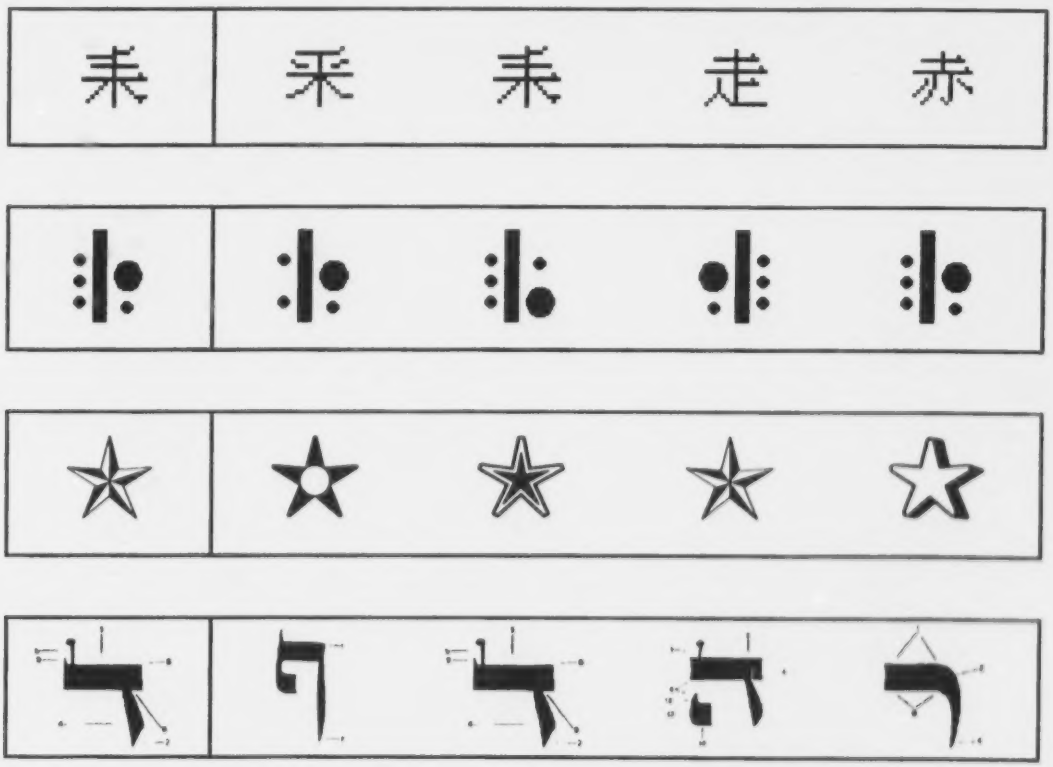
What if the list was shorter?

What if it was read twice?

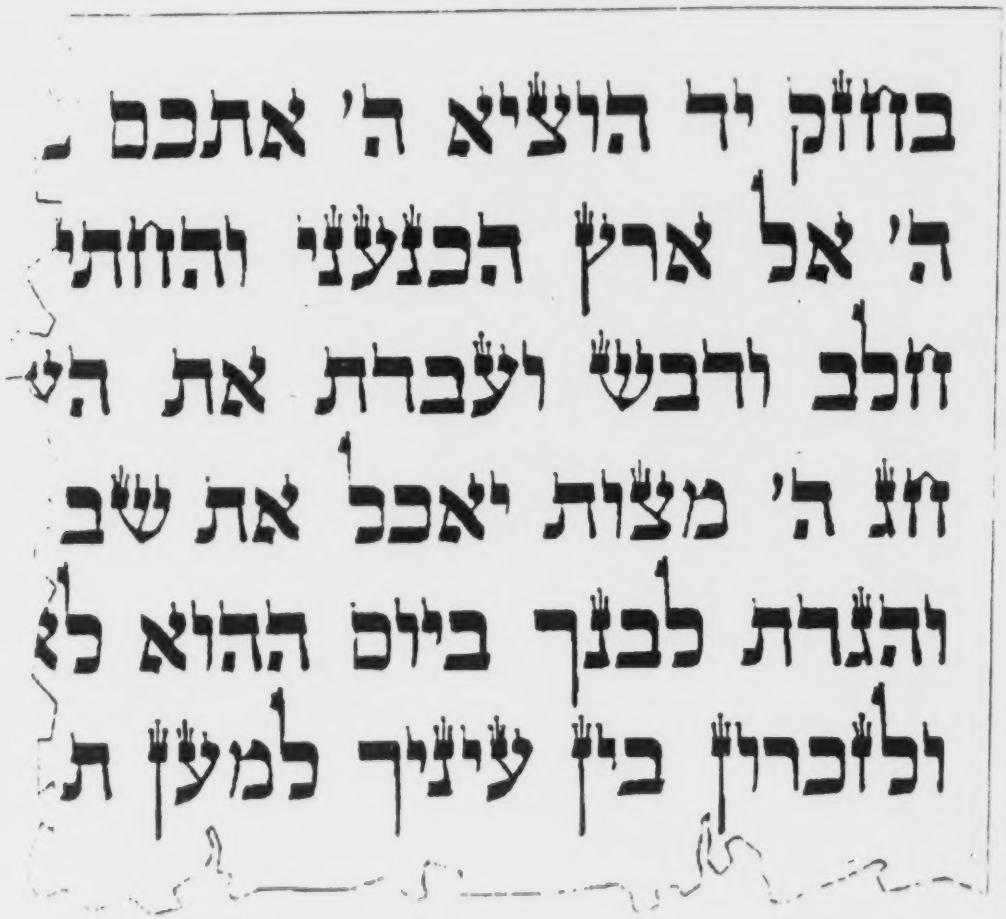
Distinguishing Symbols:

Discussion: People with intellectual / developmental disabilities sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between letters, especially those that have similar shapes.

Activity 1: Several similarly shaped characters appear in the horizontal strips below. Find the character displayed in the leftmost box of each strip and circle its match from the four choices on the right.



Activity 2: On the next page is a passage of text. Count the number of times each of the four different letters / symbols in the bottom horizontal strip appear in that passage.



Reflection: Would this entire exercise be easier if you were taught the names (meanings) of the letters / symbols?

How would you feel if every letter / symbol you encountered seemed new and unfamiliar?

Would copying the symbols be difficult at first? What problems do think you would face?

Would you be able to cover this page and write the letters / symbols above from memory?

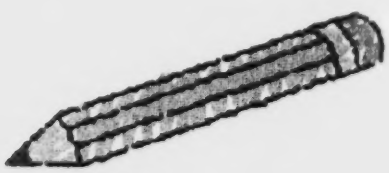
How much practice would you need?

2.5 Learner Characteristics

Although every learner is a unique individual, the life experiences of people with intellectual /developmental disabilities often share some "common elements."

Adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- May take a longer period to learn to read and write, but it can be a very successful and deeply rewarding experience.
- Develop their literacy skills more slowly, but will generally do so in the same order as other learners.
- Benefit from teaching approaches used with learners with learning disabilities and those used with other adult learners.
- May have difficulty with verbal communication. This can make it difficult to learn phonics. Using tongue twisters to develop voice projection and pronunciation may work.
- May require communication assistance technologies to develop their literacy skills. These electronic and non-electronic devices provide a means for expressive and receptive communication for people with limited (or no) speech, hearing and / or vision. Examples are Braille keyboards, speech recognition software, magnifiers, large print screens, hearing aids, amplifiers, TTY / TDD devices, and so on.
- May have initial difficulty dictating their ideas, because of underdeveloped oral language skills. Verbal tasks are, therefore, learned less quickly. Tutors must realize that poor general language skills may accompany weak literacy skills.
- May lack some fine motor control. This can affect the use of writing utensils, or legibility of handwriting or printing.



Adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- May have had some basic literacy and numeracy training (in former institutions or in the community), but many are waiting for a real opportunity to learn or advance their literacy skills.
- May also have physical disabilities or health problems (e.g., seizures).

- May be taking prescribed medications. Various medications may induce or contribute to certain behavioural and cognitive difficulties.
- May live in group homes, may live independently with or without varying levels of agency support, or may live at home with their families, while attending programs during the day.
- May have difficulty finding time for literacy instruction if they are active in the community or group home programs, or working in the community.

- May have underdeveloped time-telling skills or different concepts of time.
- May have difficulty keeping their place while reading. Lines of text may be skipped or repeated. Line guides or following with a finger can be helpful.

Adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- May be able to read aloud fairly well as emergent readers, but comprehension of what they read is often low.
- May lack awareness of writing conventions and their numeracy skills, including money handling, are often weaker than their reading skills.
- Want to engage in literacy pursuits that are not just functional in nature.
- May easily forget new concepts between sessions if tutorials are held too infrequently. Concepts should be regularly reviewed and reinforced.

Like other adult learners, people with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- May have had negative school experiences, but education experiences now can still be positive.
- May be more successful working with either a male or a female tutor.
- May prefer learning with someone closer to their own age.
- May prefer one-on-one learning instead of group instruction.
- May be able to communicate many aptitudes, ideas, interests and opinions, regardless of having lower literacy skills.
- May be very emotionally sensitive about having lower literacy skills.
- May be more able or willing to read text in a low pressure situation.
- Will have already learned some of their own reading strategies or methods of coping. Tutors must become familiar with these in order to assist the learners properly. However, learners may be rigid toward changing or adapting their learning strategies.
- Can become frustrated if they are being "taught" at too high a level too soon. Tutors must always work at the pace of the learners.

Like other adult learners, people with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- Show wide variations in intellectual ability, communication skills, social skills, self-esteem, self-confidence and life experience. These learners also demonstrate a wide range of literacy skills. In fact, reading and writing skills may vary for the same learner.
- Need to be convinced of their ability to learn, perhaps after years of unsuccessful experiences. The abilities of adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities have often been underestimated.
- May have difficulties associating sounds with symbols, especially those with marked difficulties with reading and spelling.

Focusing attention may be an issue in the learning situation, evident by:

- Difficulty staying on task
- Difficulty concentrating
- Responding impulsively
- Fidgeting
- Talking excessively
- Becoming frustrated
- Difficulty coping with background noise or distractions

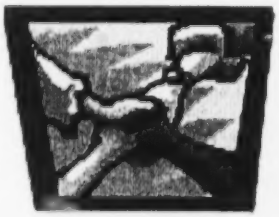
Self-esteem may be an issue in the learning situation, evident by:

- Fearing to make mistakes or take risks with learning
- Giving up quickly when faced with difficult tasks
- Focusing on self-correction
- Avoiding eye contact
- Having poor motivation
- Requiring repeated instructions
- Constantly seeking positive reinforcement

Increased literacy skills can lead to positive effects on confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

Although every learner is a unique individual, many people with intellectual / developmental disabilities also need to develop functional living skills because they:

- May have learned to be dependent in many respects. This means that setting and articulating their own goals, including learning goals, may be relatively difficult.
- May have never been employed, and some may never be able to hold a regular job. Others work in sheltered workshops, are employed with supports, or work in an entirely competitive environment.
- May have a problem finding transportation, especially at certain times of the day. The tutor may have to be the one to travel to a convenient tutoring site. Otherwise, courses need to be located in areas where these learners live.
- May demonstrate certain "behaviours" (some perhaps induced by medication) that may feel "threatening" to tutors, such as rocking back and forth or grabbing sleeves to gain someone's attention.
- Sometimes discuss personal problems that tutors have difficulty relating to, or otherwise do not feel capable of addressing. Tutors must ask themselves if they should (to any extent) become wrapped up or involved in the learner's personal problems. It is important that the tutor does not foster dependency. It is important to remember that literacy tutoring should not become social work. Literacy is the purpose for the learner and tutor working together.
- Have support networks, consisting of caregivers, parents, public guardians, approved home proprietors, therapists, social workers, supported employment workers, supervisors, workshop managers and / or outreach workers. These people can all cooperate – together and with the learner – to promote literacy building opportunities. These support networks can also help the learner to address personal problems..



Many people with intellectual / developmental disabilities also need to develop functional living skills because they:

- May want more time with tutors than is practical. Tutors may perceive that learners see the literacy program as a social outlet rather than as an opportunity for education. These things may be true at first, but once comfort levels are established, the tutor can bring the learner back to pursuing his or her literacy goals in an agreed upon partnership.

- Often do not have the opportunity to make friends outside of their everyday setting, leading to loneliness and isolation.

- Think in a "self-focused" sense of the world. The tutor may show more interest in the learner than the learner shows in the tutor. This also means that learners may have difficulty comprehending situations or ideas outside of their personal or recent experience. Differences in life experience between the learner and the tutor can be very real.
- Live life very much in the present, and they may have to be related to in such terms.
- May have lower social skills and lower confidence. They must often combat negative attitudes, as well as social isolation.

People with intellectual / developmental disabilities need to develop functional living skills because they:

- May be fearful of new situations. People often see people with disabilities as apathetic, when this fear is the reality.
- Very often experience broken relationships and have feelings of abandonment by friends, family, and staff members.
- May have learned to be non-communicative because their opinions have not been given value.

Adapted from:
Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual*, Toronto: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998, pp. 9-17; Cindy Crichton, *Reader's Theatre for the Mentally Challenged: A Handbook including Scripts*, Olds, AB: Project Read Soon, 1997, p. 3; Michael Bach, *Literacy and Labels: A Look at Literacy Policy and People with a Mental Handicap*, The G. Allan Roeher, Institute, 1990; Literacy Ontario, *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998; Maureen Sanders, *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Edmonton: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991; C.E. van Kraayenoord (ed.), *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities*, Brisbane, Australia: Fred and Eleanor Schonnell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992; Jennifer Stephen and Margot Francis, *Becoming Friends, Becoming Allies: Best Buddies Canada Training Manual*, Toronto: Best Buddies Canada, 1998.

2.6 Our Words

Learners feel extremely positive about their literacy learning experiences, as these statements suggest.

OUR WORDS

"I like to learn to write letters to my brother-in-law. I like to read. I wrote a book and I can read it. I want to do more reading. I like to write letters on the computer. The Learning Centre is a good place to come. It makes me feel special and happy about myself."

– Joan, Adult Learner

"I like computers. I like doing hard questions in math. I look forward to coming. I feel good. I like to learn."

– Brian, Adult Learner

"We play games with fake money so I can learn more about it. Those are my favourite. If I learn more about money, I can become more independent."

Darren, Adult Learner

Adapted from:
Literacy Ontario. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998; Darren Crawford and Angele Hubert. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*. Edmonton: Prospects Literacy Association, 1995.

Sandra Busch, a self-advocate / learner from Beausejour, Manitoba, was an invited speaker at the 1999 SARC Annual General Meeting and Conference.

"I want to read something that I wrote. I want to talk about the literacy program. Hi! My name is Sandra Busch and I am 31 years old and I live in Beausejour, Manitoba. I live in an apartment with a roommate. Her name is Marianne.... I like attending the literacy program. I want to learn different skills. I want to improve my reading and writing and I want to learn to work on the computer and do some math. I hope that by learning new things that I can have a more independent life. I would like to be able to stay at my own apartment and take care of my banking. I feel that if I upgrade my skills that I can one day be making my own decisions. I would like to try many new and exciting things like travelling and shopping. One day, when I find someone special, I hope to get married and live a normal life. These are just some of the reasons I attend the literacy program. I know that if my reading and writing improve, that I can one day pursue my dreams. I also come to the program because I get to meet new people and I have made some wonderful friends. It is easy to make friends when you have something in common. All the people in the program are here to learn.... There are many people who help us. Our program has seven volunteers and one teacher. They are all very nice to work with. They are also our friends. One day I hope that I can also be a volunteer and help others to read and write. Thanks."

– Sandra Busch, Adult Learner / Self-Advocate
Quoted from "A New Understanding of Literacy"
INSIGHT – Videon Cable 11 (Winnipeg, MB)
Air Date: 03/04/98

Mary Kehrig has always had a keen interest in literacy, as she had taught a Grade 1 class for one year in the early sixties. She explains that, "As our seven children started leaving home, I had the time and interest when a Futuristic Industries programmer approached me about attending a literacy workshop to tutor one of their clients." Mary has been working with sisters Adaline and Martha Menz for twelve years now. For eight years, they met regularly to work on literacy skills. Now the meetings are less frequent, with the goal of maintaining skills. Below, the two learners relate earlier school memories and some of the ways they use their literacy skills today.

"I didn't mind going to school. Math was kind of hard like dividing and multiplying. All tests were hard. Spelling words in Science and Social Studies were not easy. Spelling and Reading were better subjects. After I left school I forgot some reading and spelling. I wanted to read newspapers and write letters."

– Adaline Menz

"I liked school but it was hard. Reading was difficult and arithmetic. Spelling was not easy. Tests in Social Studies, Health and Science were hard to do. Now I like to write letters to friends and relatives. My tutor helps with spelling."

– Martha Menz

As part of the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, five member agencies of the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres worked with one or more learners to "pilot test" various literacy activities. At Kipling Industries, Wanda Vargo worked alongside Joleen Daku and Brenda Galbraith. Below, the two learners describe themselves and their impression of the program.

"My name is Joleen Daku. I was born on November 28th 1977 in Kipling. I am 22 now. I will be 23. I live with my Mom and Dad on the farm. I have a big family: Mervin, Greg, Janice, Barb, Murray, Kevin, and Joleen. I work at Kipling Industries and I also work at the care home and school library. At Kipling Industries, I sort paper and meet new friends like my special, best friend, whose name is Wanda, my pal. I also cleaned up for the open house on May 9th. At the care home I fold laundry. At the school I collect cans and juice boxes and pop bottles and collect paper too. I like to watch TV and do my crafts and I like to ride my bike. Some day I'd like to live on my own.

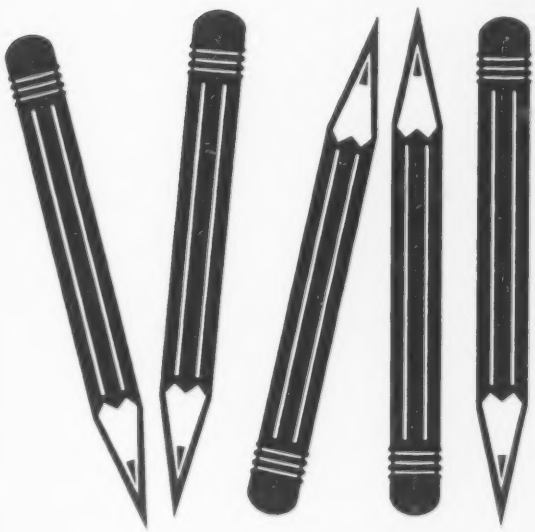
In the literacy program are Wanda and Joleen. We made posters and learned about your body. We play a game called Spelling Words. We draw pictures. I like the literacy program. I hope we will do it again next time."

– Joleen Daku

"My name is Brenda Galbraith. My birthday is August 4th 1969. I was born in Broadview. I am 30 years old. I live in Kipling. I live by myself. In my family there is my Mom and Dad and two brothers, Darcy and Darren. I work at Kipling Industries. I worked there for ten years. At work I sort paper and the clothes and I phoned Handi-Transit drivers. On Wednesday I go to T.O.P.S. and I go out for supper. I like to be with my Mom and Dad. I like to watch TV.

In the Literacy program I worked on my writing and my spelling. I make posters and we made stories. I did my journal. I like the literacy program."

– Brenda Galbraith



Participants' names and stories used with permission

Section 3

Keys to Success

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3.2	Tutor Qualities	PAGE 55
3.3	Written Materials	PAGE 57
3.4	Support and Outreach	PAGE 60
3.5	Successful Programs	PAGE 64

Section 3

Keys to Success

3.1 Introduction

This section is the product of previous research in the field of literacy and adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Four "keys to success" are: (1) Tutor Qualities; (2) Written Materials; (3) Support and Outreach; and (4) Successful Programs.

- Rehabilitation workers or tutors engaged in literacy instruction with people with developmental disabilities require certain characteristics and aptitudes to ensure successful learning relationships.
- Appropriate written materials for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities are extremely necessary, but still in relatively short supply.
- Learners with disabilities need literacy support in their different environments. It is very important that other workers involved with the learner are aware of what the learner is learning and how they can assist in the transfer of skills to other areas of the learner's life.
- Successful literacy programs share certain important features, which are listed. See also the speech entitled 'The Mind' in the Readings section of this *Handbook*.

Suzanne Smythe, a literacy instructor teaching in a workshop setting in British Columbia, shared some of her ideas on the "Keys to Success" outlined in this section, as they apply to her program. Her comments appear throughout this section of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*. She describes herself and her teaching situation below:

"I am a literacy educator employed by the Surrey School Board, outside Vancouver. My work site is a sheltered employment program housed in a huge warehouse-like structure with an attached lunchroom where I run my classes, when people aren't eating lunch! It is the first time the SSB has paid someone to teach in a site outside their own classrooms, and my presence at Clover Valley Industries is a break from the past for a number of people, including me! CVI is a member of the Surrey Association for Mental Health. This is the first time they have offered a program of this nature to their clients, who spend most of the day on the workshop floor working on contracts (making ribbons, shrink wrapping stuff, etc).

The Principal of the Continuing Education Program at the Surrey School Board, Lee Weinstein, made contact with CVI because he rightfully felt that people with intellectual disabilities were marginalised from mainstream literacy education opportunities. He also hoped that after a needs assessment and some teacher research work, we could begin to work with other residential and workplace programs who want to provide literacy education to their clients."

– Suzanne Smythe, Instructor
Surrey School Board /
Clover Valley Industries

3.2 Tutor Qualities

The attitudes and understanding that tutors bring to the learning situation are very important to the success of learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

TUTOR QUALITIES

- Respect the learners, including their interests, choices and learning goals
- Be an equal partner in the learning process; learn from the learners
- Believe learners can learn and deserve the opportunity to learn
- Possess a positive self-image, based on competence and confidence
- Have a sense of humour
- Be honest
- Be willing to commit time and effort to help
- Show enthusiasm!
- Be flexible and creative
- Avoid negative attitudes and experiences
- Listen and communicate well
- Have patience, but be persistent

- Demonstrate good people skills, including interpersonal sensitivity
- Focus on literacy, but be concerned for learners as whole people, including their empowerment, background, obstacles faced, and views of the world
- Be able to voice concerns, without embarrassment, and get all questions answered

Sources:
L'Institut Roeher Institute, *Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education.* North York, ON: L'Institut Roeher Institute, 1994, pp. 15-16, 23;
Volunteer Tutor Handbook, Invergarry Literacy Program, pp. 1-4.

Rehabilitation workers or tutors engaged in literacy instruction with people with intellectual / developmental disabilities need to possess certain characteristics and aptitudes to ensure successful learning relationships. They obviously must embrace the belief that the adult learner CAN learn. They must feel competent and confident in their ability to instruct.

The Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, as part of its SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, held an in-service session for tutors from the Regina Public Library.

Regina Public Library

Participants at the session noted the following desirable tutor qualities:

Patience	Creativity
Understanding	Awareness of Needs
Flexibility	Basic Training & Supports
Sense of Humour	Desire to Celebrate Success

It is important to emphasize that learner-tutor interactions should always be egalitarian rather than hierarchical – both participants are learning and benefiting from the relationship. Although a literacy role model, it is important that the tutor does not impose herself on the learners. The tutor's own ambitions, expectations and aspirations for the learner can be an imposition.

> "The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil."
>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson
> (1803-1882)

3.3 Written Materials

Preference should be given to "high-interest, low vocabulary" reading materials that are meaningful to the interests, life experiences, and self-identified "needs" of adult people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

WRITTEN MATERIALS

Written materials appropriate for adult learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities should:

- Be age appropriate for adults
- Provide the opportunity for learning
- Be very interesting
- Be meaningful for the audience
- Have simple sentence structure
- Follow a logical order and flow
- Use natural, everyday language
- Avoid being complex, unclear, or abstract
- Avoid jumping between the future and past
- Use attractive pictures that help the reader to understand the text
- Be presented in a clear, organized format
- Use the best writing methods, such as having a lively style, humour, and rhythm

Adapted from:
C.E. van Kraayenoord (Editor), *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities*, Fred and Eleanor Schonnell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1992, p. 75

Appropriate written materials are in short supply. Very few organizations are producing them for wide distribution or sale. However, some options do exist:

- Denise Young and Janet Pringle of the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary use a unique method to produce such materials, with participation from consultants with developmental disabilities. Janet Pringle wrote an explanatory article entitled "Get Your Message Across," which appears in the Readings section of this *Handbook.*

- The Roeher Institute is Canada's leading organization to promote the equality, participation and self-determination of people with intellectual and other disabilities. It has also produced several easy-to-read publications. Some are listed in the Bibliography section of this *Handbook.*

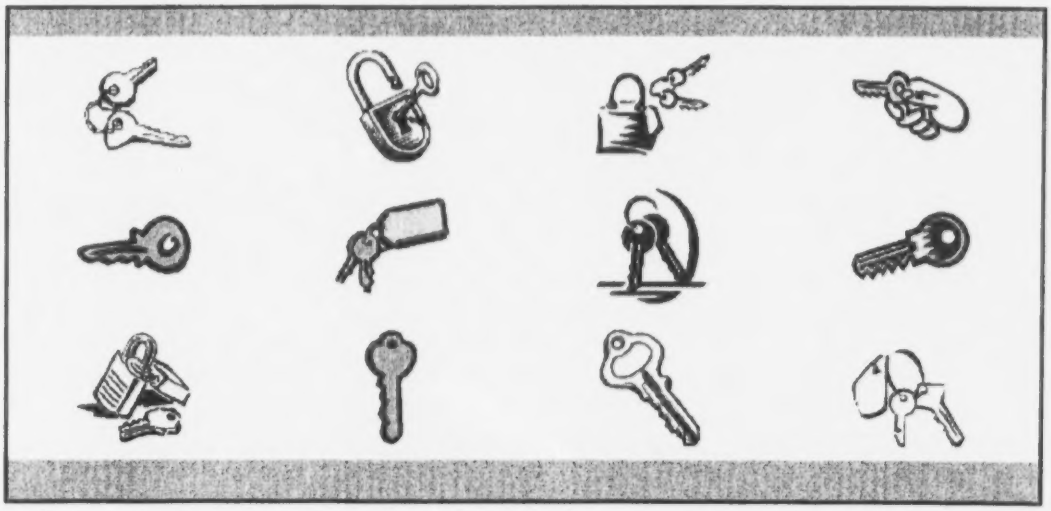
- Some appropriate materials are posted on the Internet as online documents. A few are listed in the Bibliography section of this *Handbook.*

- Many practitioners recommend using English as a Second Language (ESL) materials. They are intended for adult learners, use clear language, and include many pictures and illustrations.

- Many tutors use the Language Experience Approach as an alternative to published materials. The learner's life experiences are used as learning tools. Learners dictate their ideas to their tutors and then learn to read these stories, first with assistance, and then alone. Most people with intellectual / developmental disabilities are concrete learners. Given that learners are writing about their own interests and ideas, comprehension levels are improved. The Language Experience Approach is explained more fully in the Literacy Activities section of this *Handbook.*

"I had never worked with adults with intellectual disabilities before, though I have worked in literacy and adult ed for a number of years. So I am learning by doing, and try to make contact with others to share information and insights. I find most of the LD literature deals with specific learning disabilities for people who do not have intellectual disabilities. I have come across some good guides written by the Roeher Institute, but otherwise up to now have adapted LD stuff, and pay close attention to the learners, and follow my instincts."

– Suzanne Smythe, Instructor
Surrey School Board /
Clover Valley Industries



3.4 Support and Outreach

Cooperation is important among the tutoring site, the workplace site, and the home. New literacy skills must be practiced and reinforced in different contexts. It is important that learners with developmental disabilities have literacy support in their home or social environments, including:

- ACCESS and EXPOSURE to written materials, regardless of their current literacy skill levels;
- MODELS of others (disabled or otherwise) using literacy skills; and
- INTERACTIONS involving print.

SUPPORT

Access / Exposure	Models	Interactions
A supply of print-related materials and writing instruments should be independently and readily available to the learner in his or her home. Access to a local library, where the adult can choose materials of interest to him or her, is helpful.	Parents, caregivers, peers and friends can think aloud or directly explain what they are doing (and why) while engaged in their own literacy activities. Learners benefit from both observation and listening to text read by others (incidental learning).	Interaction entails the opportunity to discuss, comment upon, retell or ask / answer questions about written materials with others. Having homework, and someone available to provide assistance as necessary, can be an important supplement to regular instruction.

Literacy activities for personal, social, recreational, and leisure reasons, although very important, are often underemphasized in favour of more "functional" activities. Many of these skills may be better taught or supplemented in the context of the home environment.

"It is very important that other workers involved with the student are aware of what the student is learning and how they can assist in the transfer of skills to other areas of the student's life."

Jeanette Coombe, Educational Services Staff
Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI), Calgary, AB

There are endless opportunities to reinforce literacy skills through the activities of daily living. Comprehension and retention can be improved for learners when vocabulary words are directly related to their real-world counterparts. Some ideas include:

- Reading recipes while cooking;
- Marking important personal events on a wall calendar;
- Reading signs while driving;
- Making shopping lists prior to visiting the store(s);
- Choosing what to watch with the help of the television listings; and
- Reading lyrics while listening to or singing songs.

Communication and cooperation among support networks and learners in the home, teaching, and work environments can maximize "learning in context" opportunities.

Sources:
David A. Koppenhaver and Karen A. Erickson, *Literacy Strategies and Materials for Adolescents and Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Workshop sponsored by New Hampshire Department of Education and Institute on Disability / UAP, University of New Hampshire (Manchester, NH), October 27-28, 1994; Alan Kurtz, *Literacy and Developmental Disabilities* (http://www.ume.maine.edu/~cci/fcmaine/litdd.html)

In their *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Kenneth N. Beck and Pat Hatt explain that support networks and outreach efforts can be crucial in helping learners in "early literacy stages" to advance to the point where they are prepared for entry into more mainstream literacy programming.

"Many literacy practitioners are concerned about their ability to serve people who have complex needs. Some feel it is the responsibility of the Community Living agency. Some are concerned about training and maintaining volunteers who can work with people who have a developmental disability. (...) Practitioners in Community Living feel it is the responsibility of the literacy programs to ensure that programs are inclusive. Our project is an attempt to bring the two groups of practitioners together to develop common understanding, and work towards a more supportive approach."

Marianne Simpson, Executive Director
Tri-County Literacy Network

Literacy and disability organizations must consult to best serve this learner population. Staff of literacy programs do not always have adequate knowledge of the specific learning needs of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities, while staff who work in the disability field do not have adequate experience in teaching literacy skills. By sharing their areas of expertise, each can work better to provide literacy building opportunities for this learner population.

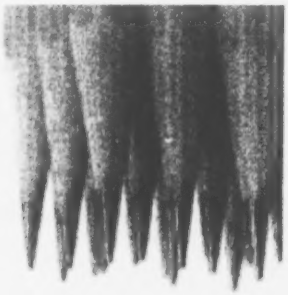
"Unless literacy learners have a few advocates within a few different organizations they won't be able to reach the outcomes that we're thinking about... . And I think that it is important that one or two different organizations recognize that they need to have the same "goals" for people with intellectual disabilities, so that one person feels supported by more than just their worker or their literacy tutor."

Lisa Marie Bossert, Provincial Coordinator
Frontier College, Edmonton, AB

"I work alone, and often feel isolated in terms of being able to talk about the work to people other than the learners, to get a more objective view of what is happening in our program. I also find it hard to involve caregivers and families. I feel it is important that they at least know about the program, its goals, and the ways they may support their client/family member. I know that some are often facing difficult living and work conditions, and are in need of support and understanding. (...)

Also, I struggle with the question of how the literacy program can have meaningful impact on learners' everyday lives outside our literacy class. Learners seem to like the program and CVI staff and caregivers seem happy about it too, but what does that mean for learners in terms of their own efforts to live more independently and with more respect for their opinions and views? Some caregivers seem to want to protect their clients/family members, and to define their skills and abilities and potential for them. Some have absolutely no interest in what their clients/family members are doing. Others, however, are interested, supportive and open to making changes."

– Suzanne Smythe, Instructor
Surrey School Board /
Clover Valley Industries



3.5 Successful Programs

Literacy programs that successfully include people with intellectual / developmental disabilities share common features.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

- Have leaders who are strong advocates for policies which support full and equal access
- Strongly emphasize the fact that people with intellectual / developmental disabilities can learn, and strongly promote positive tutor attitudes
- Recruit supportive tutors and instructors
- Are broadly inclusive in their eligibility criteria, assessments, teaching approaches, and evaluation methods
- Support learner-based methods of instruction and resources
- Provide supports (emotional, motivational, other) to increase accessibility
- Feel prepared to deal with the special needs and issues these learners may bring with them, either directly or by referral
- Provide access to a reference library / special resources dealing with issues and concerns
- Place emphasis on quality tutor training and on providing tutor supports (continual training, awareness / understanding, back up, personal support)
- Perform outreach (linking literacy and disability practitioners) and promote cooperation in the wider learning environment (home situation, everyday literacy opportunities).

Adapted from:
Literacy Ontario, *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998;
Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education, The G. Allan Roeher Institute, 1994;
Volunteer Tutor Handbook, Invergarry Literacy Program, pp. 3-4.

"Some of the main goals of the literacy program are:

- to promote clients' images of themselves as learners, with power to make meaningful decisions about what they learn and how;
- promote an atmosphere of cooperation through peer teaching, discussion and flexibility;
- promote multiple intelligence/multisensory learning approaches so everyone has a chance to succeed, e.g., through painting, movement, role play, drawing, collage as well as reading and writing for a variety of purposes;
- create real opportunities for learners to use their literacy skills, through pen pals, stories and poems for publication (in the class, and in the community living movement and hopefully more broadly), making use of the library, etc.; and
- make sure I work with everyone one-to-one at least once every two weeks.

We hope to compile learners' writings into a book, as well as compile a recipe book from the cooking experiences we've had. I think meeting these goals is an ongoing process."

– Suzanne Smythe, Instructor
Surrey School Board /
Clover Valley Industries

Section 4

Advice to Tutors

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Section 4

Advice to Tutors

4.1 Introduction

This is an important section of the *SARC Supplemental Tutor Handbook* because:

- The new tutor, especially one who is going to be working with a special needs learner, will undoubtedly have numerous questions.
- Tutors may be isolated from networking opportunities, since there may be only a few others working in this area, or they may be far apart.

This section compiles advice from a variety of different sources, including:

- The Arc of the United States
- Transcripts of a teleconference call, featuring members of the Consultation Network for the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project.
- Several existing literacy publications, including manuals on the topic of literacy for persons with intellectual / developmental disabilities.
- A Member agency of the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, which served as a pilot site for our project.

Tutors should review this section of the Handbook often. The advice that applies to a particular tutoring situation today may not be the same advice that applies tomorrow.

> "I like to think of it as the tutor is a tool and they're there to assist the person to learn. They're not there to teach the person. I think there's a difference."
>
> Cindy Crichton, Consultant
> C.C. Consulting, Olds, AB

4.2 Communication Tips

Discussing Disabilities

There are some simple guidelines for discussing disabilities. Through using words with dignity, equality between tutors and learners is encouraged.

WORDS WITH DIGNITY

- It is not necessary to discuss an individual's disability unless it is relevant to a conversation.
- When appropriate to discuss disability, remember that you are dealing with a person first. Any disability is secondary. For example, refer to "a person with a disability" rather than "a disabled individual."
- A person is not a condition, so avoid describing a person as such. For example, refer to "a person with epilepsy" rather than "an epileptic."
- A person who has a disability is not necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy. He or she simply has a disability.
- Remember that negative labels are also associated with having lower literacy skills, so avoid these types of labels, too.

Label jars...
...not people!

Sources:
Developmental Disabilities Resource Center [http://www.ddrcco.com/glosintro.htm];
Community Resources for Independence, Inc [http://www.crinet.org/index.htm];
Paraquad, Inc. [http://www.paraquad.org/wwd.htm]

Certain words have strong negative connotations, while others are affirmative and reflect a more positive attitude.

Do not use...	Use...
• handicapped • crippled • invalid • challenged	• person with a disability
• victim of... • afflicted with... • stricken with...	• person who has... • person with...
• birth defect	• disabled since birth • born with
• slow • retard • mentally deficient • underachiever • mongoloid	• developmental disability • developmental delay • intellectual disability • with Down syndrome

Other terms should be avoided because they have negative connotations and tend to evoke pity and fear. Examples include: abnormal, differently-abled, sufferer and tragic.

Sources:
Developmental Disabilities Resource Center [http://www.ddrcco.com/glosintro.htm];
Community Resources for Independence, Inc [http://www.crinet.org/index.htm];
Paraquad, Inc. [http://www.paraquad.org/wwd.htm]

Overall, it is important to be conscious of how disabilities are discussed.

"We are becoming more sensitized than any other generation to be aware of the effect negative labels can have on individuals, families, and communities – whether consciously or unconsciously. In these enlightened times, if a term can be expressed in a less harmful way, then we must strive to do so."

– Judy McCann-Beranger, M.A., CCF
Family Service Canada
http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/00000007.htm

Effective Communication

There are no hard and fast rules to use when talking to someone with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The communication techniques below may be helpful, and can even be used to improve communication with people who have similar disabilities such as those with acquired brain injuries and learning disabilities.

COMMUNICATION

There are some points to remember:

- Speak directly to the person and maintain eye contact.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use simple language and speak slowly and clearly.
- Ask for concrete information when asking questions.
- Break complicated series of instructions or information into smaller parts.
- Whenever possible, use pictures, symbols, and actions to help convey meaning.

Patience is essential:

- Take time giving or asking for information.
- Avoid confusing questions about underlying reasons (i.e., detailed explanations for behaviour).
- Repeat questions more than once or ask a question in a different way.
- If necessary, ask the person to repeat or summarize the question you are asking her before she answers, to ensure the question is understood.

- Use calm persistence when asking the person important questions. However, always respect the person's privacy.

- When asking questions of someone with an intellectual / developmental disability, do not ask the person in a way to solicit a certain answer. Do not ask leading questions. We want to learn about the learner as she or he truly is.

- Phrase questions to avoid "yes" or "no" answers. Instead, ask open-ended questions (e.g., "Tell me what this picture describes.").

Despite any difficulties never assume someone with a disability is incapable of understanding or communicating.

It is also essential that adults be treated as adults and be treated with respect.

Adapted from:
The Arc of the United States, *A Police Officer's Guide When in Contact with People Who Have Mental Retardation*, Arlington, TX [http://thearc.org/ada/police.html]
Used with Permission

4.3 Consultation Network

As part of the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, several experts in the area of literacy for persons with intellectual / developmental disabilities served as members of a Consultation Network for the project. Several members participated in a teleconference, where they related the following words of advice:

Lisa Marie Bossert: I think the most important thing I always tell people... is that it's not a magical thing, and you're not going to give tutors who are going to work with adults with developmental disabilities a magical tool such that they now know how to teach somebody with disabilities.

This is what my tutors have told me. The tutors who have worked with people with developmental disabilities and other learners say they have gotten so much more and so much satisfaction and enjoyment out of working with this population than any other volunteer work they've ever done. It's such a personal, fulfilling and fun! fun! fun! thing to do.

Cindy Crichton: To be learner-focused is very, very important. All of our volunteer tutors come in with their own reasons to come in to be a volunteer tutor. Sometimes we come in with our own expectations and one of the things that I've always said is, "Have realistic expectations." This goes back to giving the individual choices, I guess, but sometimes we come in with our own expectations. And we have to leave it realistic for that individual. ... If the individual is coming there so they can find phone numbers, we're not going to have them read *War and Peace*. That's the kind of thing I've always said.

Janet Pringle: I always, in the fairly early stages with somebody new in the group, am really up front about the fact that they have a developmental disability – I don't avoid the words – and that it is a stigmatized place to be in society and I address that. And I say, "What you're doing when you are telling me things you don't understand is you're helping me to find ways of helping lots and lots of other people" and "Because you don't understand everything as quickly as some people in society doesn't mean you're not an okay person." I'm really quite up front. We tend to be quite embarrassed, I think, about talking about things that are not really acceptable in society. So, I'm trying to turn that around and say that they have a right to be respected and I offer them that respect and they offer it to me. I tell them when they've taught me some things, which is frequently.

Glenn Yates: After visiting so many literacy programs that aren't fun, the fun ones are the ones that are very successful and people want to be there.

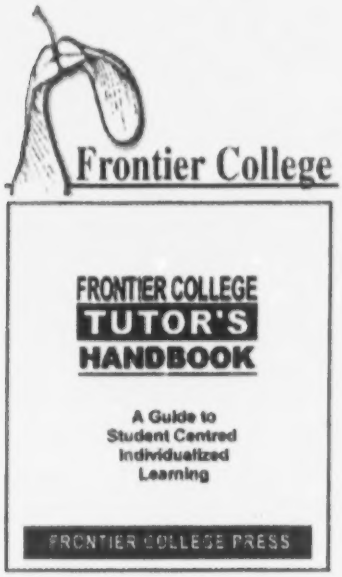
But there are sort of the two sentences I've heard – "Making it relevant to the learner's life" and, along with that, "Making sure that it's learning for life and not lifelong learning," especially in the developmental disability world – making sure that it's outcome based as opposed to a social interaction that's going to take forever, to go on and on and on. And I'm hearing that over and over and over again here from programs.

Lisa Marie Bossert: Please communicate with the other [support] staff, but don't let them tell you what to teach.... Often we've had parents or support staff saying, "Okay, we've got a tutor now. This is what you need to teach this person." And that happens almost one hundred percent of the time... [L]earning needs to be relevant to the learner and the goals need to be set by the learner.

Cindy Crichton: I think teaching or telling the individual, "You can say 'no' You're an adult and you have choices and it's okay to say 'no'" is a very important step in their self-esteem and independence.

4.4 Things to Remember

The *Frontier College Tutor's Handbook* outlines "some things to remember about tutoring students with intellectual disabilities."



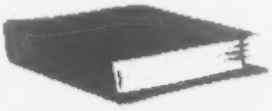
- You may be the first person who has ever believed that your student is smart and can learn. Remind her of this fact often.
- Take the time to listen to your student and give feedback in as positive a manner as you can.
- Be aware of your student's attention span. You may need to take frequent breaks in your sessions.
- Remember that your student may have unusual behaviour such as tapping or rocking which helps her stay focused. This used to be called "self-stimulation." It is now considered assistance in focusing.
- Look for common sense, practical solutions to problems. Do any of the following affect your student and / or your tutoring sessions?
  - need for glasses;
  - music / no music;
  - quiet / busy (noisy) environment;
  - involved with parents / not involved with parents;
  - strong / weak lighting;
  - cold / hot environment;
  - involved with kids / not involved with kids;
  - access to a computer / no access to a computer.

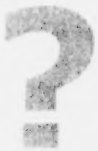
  Some of these things may provide the answer or be the reason for certain behaviours.

- Recognize and celebrate small achievements.
- Use everything around you. Try to make lessons progress naturally, each one building on what has come before. Try to relate the things you are working on to things you have done in the past.
- Try using English as a Second Language materials which are designed for adults and are written using clear language with lots of pictures. They can be very useful in working with students with intellectual disabilities.
- Encourage the use of student writings as much as possible. Publishing student writing validates the student's experiences and makes the work available to other students. These personal stories can spark the creative juices of students who have never thought of writing their own story.

- Don't sweep the disability or sadness about the disability under the rug. Sometimes it is liberating for students to write about their personal story.
- Don't feel you must spend all of your tutoring time working. There is an added dimension to the relationship when you can spend time doing something else together. Attending tutor-student nights at the literacy program together is always an option.
- Repeat things. Try different kinds of repetition. For example, talking or role playing assists with aural skills, matching cutouts appeals to tactile skills, and silent writing appeals to analytical and visual skills. Think about how you learn things and how your student may learn things.

- Communication is more important than whether the student's reading and writing is letter perfect. Did he or she get the funny part in the story she just read despite tripping over lots of tough words?
- Separate form from content. Students may not realize that the rules for written and spoken languages are different and that they change in every context. Focusing on clear thinking and communication of information is more useful. Ask questions like:
  - *What did you mean?*
  - *Did that make sense?*
  - *Can you explain more about that to me?*
- Help the student realize that she has something to say and that writing and speaking aloud are ways of making oneself be heard. For that reason, talking may be the most important thing you do in most lessons. You can even explain a government budget by drawing a parallel with the student's own budget. Tough topics tackled in a creative way empower the student.
- Don't impose yourself on the student. Fixing a sentence may be an imposition. Suggesting a writing topic may be an imposition. What can the student really do on her own without any intervention by you? Bite your tongue and you'll really be surprised. There is a much greater sense of accomplishment when students achieve a goal on their own.





- Encourage your student to ask questions when she doesn't understand something. Real communication happens when both partners feel safe enough to say they don't understand.

- Call the literacy program co-ordinator for support when you need it, don't just leave your student hanging when you're not sure what to do.

- Remember about burnout, which happens when you are trying to do too much or be everything to your student. No one has that much energy. Be very clear about your boundaries and how much time and energy you are happy and willing to give to this relationship.

frontier college
Helping Canada Read

- Show respect for the student by not accepting comments and behaviours that you would not accept from others. Just because a student has a disability doesn't mean she shouldn't have a sense of responsibility.
- Above all, treat your student the way you would want to be treated.

Source:
The Frontier College Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning.
Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997, pp. 9-13 – 9-15

4.5 Axioms to Help Your Tutoring

Community Learning Scotland provides some general guidance to help you in the tutoring context:

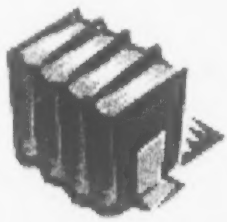
formerly known as the Scottish Community Education Council

- As a general rule, **if students are not looking they are not listening**. (Autistic students, however, will tend to avoid eye contact.)
- Don't talk about your students in front of them, as though they are not there. If you discuss them with an onlooker or a visitor, ask the student's permission, and say who the visitor is.
- Always try and cue your students by name, if necessary using a slightly louder voice than normal, just to attract initial attention. If you continue speaking for some time, keep using their name.
- When talking **do not use over-formal or vague language**. Be direct, simple and take account of their possible difficulties in processing language. **Wait patiently for replies**, and don't anticipate their answers by supplying words. Unless you are intentionally trying to extend their range, use the kind of vocabulary and patterns they use, unless they are unacceptable. If you are explaining something, frame your message clearly in helpful chunks. Avoid complex constructions like passives, or embedded sentences: e.g. Not 'the pen should be taken in the right hand... ' but 'Pick the pen up with your hand like this... ' Not 'Now I want you to think back to what we did last week, ... ' but 'Last week we did something with the clock. What was it?'
- Signal your meanings and intentions clearly, using your voice, eyes, facial expression and gestures in an uninhibited way. This isn't a licence to 'ham,' but encouragement to be extrovert and helpful. Adults with learning difficulties can be very adept at interpreting body language, so maximize your cues.

- Monitor your students' faces continually, as they often lack the verbal means to indicate their incomprehension, doubt, uncertainty, etc. If it is very important that they understand a particular message, get them to demonstrate their comprehension by doing something appropriate or answering a question about it.

- Students may be poor at handling the social part of an exchange with others, that is, they butt in, miss out introductory patter, don't wait to take turns, assume you know what they are talking about without any preamble, and so on. Don't be offended, but try to model these conventions little by little.

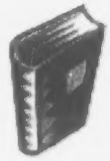
- Many students, particularly those who have spent a long time in institutions, will have suffered all kinds of sensory deprivation, and hence particularly appreciate a warm, reassuring relationship. They will tend to respond to normal contact with physical warmth, frequent greetings and generous gestures of affection. You might find this a little disconcerting at first, and those students who are on an 'outward' track back into the community, may need help in normalising their habits to those of their prospective community. This may involve you in discussing things like the 'correct' social distance between people when they are conversing, forms of acceptable greetings, (like, we only use 'How do you do?' when we are introduced for the first time), and techniques for avoiding social embarrassment, like not raising the voice, not clutching people by the sleeve to get their attention, and so on. (You may feel it would be a better world if we could retrain society!)



- Try to become more sensitive to the limitations your own use of language imposes. For example, if you tend to issue directions all the time, there is little students can do, other than comply or decline. If you ask **yes / no** questions only, they need never say more than 'Yes' or 'No,' or merely nod or shake their head. Instead, try using language that will require language in return. Ask information-seeking questions, beginning with WH-words (What / Where / When / Who / Why / How – the last two being most demanding). Invite suggestions with questions like 'What do you think I / he should do now?' / 'What should he / they do?' 'What would you say to him / her?' etc. Beware that your language doesn't become pidginized or too indirect. Avoid questions like 'What's this doing here?' when you really mean 'Who put this shoe on the table?'

- Make learning concrete, lively and memorable by relating it to events and activities. Get students to handle things and do things. Don't expect them to sit through long explanations. Keep them involved.

- Don't expect to follow your syllabus in an orderly way. Be prepared for constant interruptions and distractions, especially while you're new. Take advantage of the unpredictable by turning it into learning opportunities. If the phone rings, answer it, then ask 'Who do you think that was? ... Well, it was ... What do you think she wanted? ... She wanted to come and see us. When would be a good time? ... ' etc. It is worth making a distinction between long-term aims and your short-term strategies. Always have a number of activities available that you can switch into your lesson as circumstances allow or when interest flags. If you have to leave the room, for example, have a game ready that will keep your students occupied.



- Keep a record of your activities and each student's achievement, however small. Check your notes periodically to see whether you are moving towards the student's long-term objectives. Over half-yearly periods, summarize your gains. This will help your morale.
- Avoid long breaks or gaps in your tutoring 'terms.' Little and often is best. Long holidays or lay-offs are especially harmful.
- Familiarize yourself with your student's 'knowledge of the world.' You will probably be staggered to discover what they know or don't know. Be prepared for well-rehearsed routines from some students but don't be misled or overimpressed by knowledge on a favourite topic. New topics may impose quite severe demands, so structure them carefully.
- Use your elicited information about the student's knowledge to help you build. Proceed from the known to the new unknown by tiny steps, fixing each step as you proceed. Revise constantly. Keep details of where each student is 'at,' so that you can quickly refresh your memory when alternating between students. (The students can learn to maintain their own folder of the Social Sight Words they know, or the number concepts they have mastered. You simply tip the items out to check.)
- Use consistent labelling when tutoring and always try and use the same expression for instructions. Avoid euphemisms, like 'put the doodah back on the whatchamacallit for me.'
- Be liberal in your encouragement, lavish with your praise, and avoid failure whenever possible.
- Don't build up a bow-wave of possible disappointment by expecting to achieve too much too soon. **Be Patient.**

Source:
Community Learning Scotland (formerly known as the Scottish Community Education Council),
Moving Ahead: A New Handbook for Tutors Helping Adults with Learning Difficulties.
Edinburgh: Community Learning Scotland, 1995, pp.16-18.
www.communitylearning.org
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4.6 Advice to Tutors and What They Could Expect

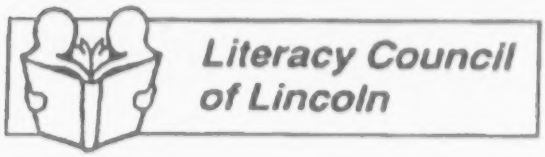
The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) Educational Services Staff offer some advice to tutors, including what they could expect. Some things they thought were important to mention are:

The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute
Educational Services Staff
(Calgary, AB)

- Depending on the client, you will find that most clients have an attention span of 15-30 minutes for one activity.
- Progress can be very slow. Measure it in months rather than weeks. The progress depends on the frequency and consistency of the instruction.
- Students are concrete learners. Experiences / stories that are linked to their own experiences will be easier for them to comprehend.
- Be creative and flexible with your instructional methods. Adapt the learning needs to the interest of the student. For example, one student is learning to read by rereading her journal that she enjoys writing through dictation.
- Use as many different activities as you can think of for each concept you are teaching. For example, teaching the alphabet letters can be done through:
  - Doing an alphabet Bingo
  - Playing Hangman
  - playing Wheel of Fortune®
  - playing SCRABBLE® Junior
  - The use of flashcards (matching the letter cards, using the flashcards in a memory game, and play Go Fish with the cards);
- Above all, have fun! Make it an enjoyable experience for both the student and you, the tutor.

4.7 Tutor Tips – When You Meet a Person With "Special Needs"

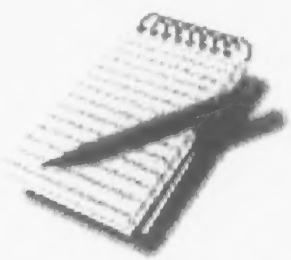
The Literacy Council of Lincoln offers the following advice to tutors:



- Remember that the individual with a disability is a person just like anyone else.
- Be yourself when you meet him / her.
- Talk about the same things that you would with anyone else.
- Help only when it is needed. Use your judgement. Don't let yourself constantly assist individuals who need to develop more independence.
- Be patient. It is often harder to wait for an inexperienced person to do something than it is to do it yourself.
- Don't be over-protective or over-solicitous. Don't shower the person with kindness or be over-sympathetic.
- Don't offer pity or charity. Treat the person as an equal in all things. Being disabled should not be looked at as a negative experience. An individual with a developmental disability is just another person with their individual set of goals, limits, capabilities, attitudes, experiences, needs, etc. just like you.
- Don't make up your mind about a person ahead of time. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging his / her interests or abilities.
- Enjoy your friendship with the person – his / her philosophy and good humour will give you inspiration!

Here are some additional tips:

- Take the positive rather than the negative approach. Look at the person in terms of what he / she can do rather that what he / she can not do.
- Expect enough of each person to make the learning experience stimulating, but not so much that he / she is constantly frustrated by failure. It requires time to understand each person's capabilities.
- Since many people have short attention spans and are easily distracted, have plans for a variety of activities.
- Establish short-range, realistic, obtainable goals; ones the person can understand. Many people can accomplish a lot but it takes time.
- Concentrate on doing, seeing, and feeling. Be concrete rather than abstract; avoid generalizations.
- Relate activities to the person's situation. We all learn best when what we are being taught makes sense to us in terms of our own experience.
- Give specific directions and give them one step at a time. Several directions, given in rapid succession, are confusing. Showing is often more effective than telling, or combine the two.



Source:
Literacy Council of Lincoln, *Training Manual for Tutors of Developmentally-Challenged Adults.*
Beamsville, ON: Literacy Council of Lincoln, 1994., p. 49.
Some information from the source was adapted from the
Grimsby / Lincoln and District Association for Community Living.

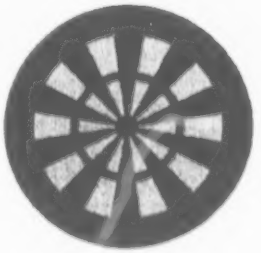
4.8 Learners in Action

The following article, compiled by Arlene MacLowick, is entitled, "What Do You Think About _____?" It appeared in the *Learner's in ACTION* newsletter, produced by the Movement for Canadian Literacy's Learner's Advisory Network. Learner Coordinators from across the country gathered to discuss some issues raised by learners, including learner empowerment. The advice they came up with will be helpful to all tutors, not just those working with adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

- The key to empowerment is helping people find their own solutions at their own pace.
- Teachers have to recognize and respect the learner's version of success. We may have very different values for what we call success. Make sure you are following the learner's agenda and not your own when defining goals and success.
- Tell people what they need to know – too much information or choice can be smothering.
- Be honest with learners. That means building a relationship of trust so that you can say things that people need to hear but might not like. In most cases, protecting is patronizing.

- Be realistic about learning with students. Education can change your quality of life but it's not magic. It may not lead to a better job, more money, etc.

- We all need to know that we can change our minds. We can learn from our mistakes. There is no shame in starting again.
- Accountability is important on both sides. Instructors and learners should be part of setting realistic goals and the "step by step" process in reaching them. Flexibility and revising plans are also part of the process. A lot of learning happens when you think about your goals. Then you can see how far you have come and plan the next steps.



- Be an active listener and treat people with respect. Listen with empathy: try to understand the other person's point of view or their feelings.
- Give people time to work on their literacy. People tend to learn at their own pace. Adults do not necessarily learn faster than children do.

- Play back (repeat) things to be sure you are understood or that you have heard the correct message.
- Use plain language but don't patronize people by simplifying too much. Explain the meanings of words or paraphrase (use ones that mean the same) so that people will know what the words mean the next time they hear them. Learners need access to more language, too. The more people understand, the more they are comfortable in a wider circle of people.

- People need social skills to step up in the world and to have the world open up for them. These are the skills needed to be comfortable in a new group of people. Every group has its rules and people need to know the rules of the new group.
- Sometimes people need to know about things they can change or do, to save them from embarrassment. There are always respectful ways to tell people what they need to hear. Often you can set people up for humiliation or failure if you aren't honest with them.

- We all face barriers of one kind or another. As people we have a lot in common regardless of our education. No matter who we are, we are all learning most of the time.

Movement for Canadian Literacy

Source:
"What Do You Thinks About _____?" *Learners in Action* (A publication of the Movement for Canadian Literacy's Learner's Advisory Network) Fourth Issue (May 2000), pp. 3-4.
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4.10 Additional Advice

The following pages contain short lists of additional helpful tips. Review them often!

Praise, Mistakes, Creativity

- Steady praise and encouragement are extremely important. Acknowledgement of successes is essential, even for routine activities.
- Acknowledge your own mistakes. Emphasise the point to your learner that everyone makes mistakes, and that it is okay. Demonstrate the strategies you use to correct your own errors. Be a model for your learner.
- Try your own ideas for literacy teaching. Be creative! Repeat successful activities. Learn which activities are less successful, and replace them.

> "A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success."
>
> Anonymous

Advice from the Pilot Sites

As part of the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, five agencies pilot tested literacy activities and strategies. Wanda Vargo of Kipling Industries provides these words of advice based on her experiences:

- Keep stories and activities centred around the learners' specific interests. For example, our learners enjoyed a story entitled 'Special Olympics,' but had no interest in one titled 'The Foolish Beggar.'

- Centre a lesson around a theme, so that learning is tied together. For themes like 'Sports' or 'Food,' you can cut out pictures, draw pictures, and discuss the topic.
- Hands-on activities were the most interesting and needed the least amount of explanation. Again, examples are cutting out pictures for a story and drawing a picture of their favourite sport.

- It is important to teach by example. Show the learner exactly what you would like them to do so that they don't feel confused or uncomfortable when doing an activity.
- Take short breaks during sessions, especially when switching to a new activity. Trying to do too much at once can cause frustration.
- Make lessons less like work and more like fun. For example, use crossword puzzles and hidden object pictures or play word games like Upwords, I Spy, etc.

- Mix several types of activities in each session. This keeps the topic from getting boring. For example, do some reading, some writing, with lots of discussion.

"I started tutoring to get to know people in Regina and to get back into the work force after being away from here for almost 20 years. (...) I found 'special needs' learners to be wholeheartedly accepting and to be ever so thankful for anything you did to help them. One thing I would like to pass on to tutors who want to work with 'special needs' learners is this – love and patience go a long way. As a tutor one may end up feeling that one has learned far more than one has taught."

Pat Colpitts, Literacy Program Director
Neil Squire Foundation, Regina, SK

Meeting Challenges

The CHALLENGES Literacy Project of the PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association was a two-year pilot project to examine the feasibility of using volunteer tutors to work with adults with developmental disabilities. Maureen Sanders wrote about the lessons they learned. We paraphrase some of this advice below:

- Learners will be eager to tell you about the important happenings in their lives. By listening actively and respectfully, you can help establish a trust relationship with your learner. This is important, because learners often feel insecure about their literacy difficulties.
- Learners come to literacy in their own way. They may need a significant amount of time and space to do this.
- Learners require a lot of encouragement from their tutors to become involved in their own learning. When these learners are responsible for their own learning, they often have more success.

Source:
Maureen Sanders, *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Edmonton: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991, pp. 3-22.

Section 5

Assessment

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Section 5

Assessment

5.1 Introduction

Assessment tools specifically designed for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities are not commonplace. Most assessments for members of this learner population are informal and custom-made.

Tutors should always attempt to learn as much as possible about the learners, so that appropriate learning activities and learning materials are chosen. The activities and materials must reflect the learners' interests, needs, learning preferences, and learning styles.

Informal questions can be asked about learners' previous learning experiences, the kind of supports the learners may need, the learners' work experience and current literacy competency, as well as the learners' goals. Based on this information, tutors choose appropriate reading passages and writing tasks to more specifically assess learners' current skill levels in these areas.

> "In starting it is important to teach what they want and need to learn to keep their interest. Then identify their reading, writing and spelling level for selecting suitable materials and methods."
>
> Mary Kehrig, Literacy Tutor
> Humboldt, SK

This section of the *Handbook* begins by outlining two different sets of descriptive literacy stages that may help tutors assess the current interest and ability levels of learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Goal setting is discussed, and some helpful exercises are described. Three different learning styles are defined. Learners may lean toward one more than the others, but all styles should be emphasized, since learning may be reinforced that way. Ongoing assessment is then briefly covered. An important segment included in this section is a listing of Further Resources. These should be consulted for more advice and models for performing initial assessments.

5.2 Distinguishing Literacy Stages

Introduction

The goal of assessing learners is to discover each one's current abilities, interests, and initial potential for improvement. It is often helpful to put this information into context, through comparing a learner to some pre-determined benchmarks, which are based on direct previous experience with many learners. It should be cautioned that such benchmarks never exactly fit individual learners, who may exhibit characteristics from more than one category. Nevertheless, considering these benchmarks may potentially contribute some valuable perspective for the tutor. When referred to over time, they could also serve as a very rough indicator of learner progress.

Two categorization schemes are described in the pages to follow. Each scheme includes three categories, labeled as "stages." The stages are said to be progressive, which means that learners described in the first stages most likely have less developed skills than the ones best described by the later stages.

CHALLENGES Literacy Stages

Several years ago, the PROSPECTS Literacy Association in Edmonton initiated a literacy program inclusive of people with developmental disabilities. Its name is CHALLENGES. In describing this program, Maureen Saunders distinguished three literacy stages that described difficulties of participating learners.

Literacy Preparation Project Stages

In their recent *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, Kenneth N. Beck and Pat Hatt outlined three early literacy stages. The intent of their project was to provide assessment tools to gather basic information about potential adult learners with developmental disabilities prior to their entry in a literacy agency. These authors promote a more "can-do" view in their work.

The initial stages described in the categorization schemes are summarized together. The secondary and final stages are summarized in a similar way.

Summaries

FIRST STAGES

CHALLENGES Literacy Stage One

Observations:

- Some participants were unable to obtain instructional level scores on graded word lists in an informal reading inventory.
- Some participants were unable to identify many common words from everyday experience when they were out of context.
- Some participants could recognize words at a pre-primer level, but were unable to demonstrate understanding of what they read.
- All participants were able to write their names.
- Some participants could write a few other words.
- Most participants were reluctant to write.
- Participants' knowledge of the alphabet ranged from very little to almost complete.
- Several participants had difficulty keeping their place as they read.

Literacy Preparation Project Stage I

Awareness:

- These adults are aware that others can read.

Interest:

- These adults do not show a personal interest in literacy, but some encouragement may spark an interest.

Readiness:

- Others have identified these adults as potential candidates for attaining literacy skills.
- These adults may not have had any prior opportunity to gain literacy skills.
- These adults may recognize certain words.
- They have the ability to learn new tasks.
- They have some problem solving skills.

Context:

- People at this stage see a piece of paper as a plaything, but are aware that others read.

SECOND STAGES

PROSPECTS Literacy Stage Two

Observations:

- Participants were able to read and understand material anywhere from a primer or grade one level up to about a grade three level on reading tasks from an informal reading inventory.
- Some participants were print-based readers, being more successful on word identification than on comprehension tasks.

Literacy Preparation Project Stage II

Awareness:

- These adults can suggest a use for literacy skills.

Interest:

- These adults have expressed an interest in obtaining literacy skills.

Readiness:

- These adults can recognize their own name in print.
- These adults know how to hold a book or a magazine.
- These adults have difficulty sustaining their skill levels – lessons have to be continually taught for retention purposes.
- They have difficulty using information in a comprehensive, sustaining, and practical way.
- They do not seem to be able to move ahead – but they may not be expected to or sufficiently challenged to move ahead.

Context:

- People at this stage may see that a piece of paper contains something, but it probably has little meaning for them.

THIRD STAGES

PROSPECTS Literacy Stage Three

Observations:

- These participants' scores ranged from a grade four level to a grade seven level in both word recognition and comprehension on informal reading inventories.
- Most participants had good strategies for figuring out unknown words.
- For these participants, comprehension still lagged behind word recognition.
- In general, most participants were fairly comfortable about writing, varying in their levels of fluency and concerns for correctness.

Literacy Preparation Project Stage III

Awareness:

- These adults have a sufficient understanding of what literacy involves – letters make up words and the words have meaning.

Interest:

- These adults are interested in literacy, are motivated to learn, and have goals related to literacy.

Readiness:

- These adults enjoy looking at books and magazines.
- These adults can recognize some words.
- They can usually work in a co-operative setting, take direction, and can stay on task.
- These adults are like anyone else who would like to enter literacy programming.

Context:

- People at this stage understand that a piece of paper contains "codes" that they want to "decipher."

Adapted from:

Maureen Sanders, *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, PROSPECTS Literacy Association, 1991.

Kenneth N. Beck and Pat Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Training Manual*, Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 1998.

5.3 Goal Setting

Many adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities have learned to be dependent in many respects, and some have low expectations of themselves. Learning options may not have been outlined to them. They may have received little encouragement toward learning and may not have confidence that they can meet certain goals. For these and other reasons, setting and articulating learning goals may be relatively difficult for this learner population.

GOAL SETTING

Questions to Ask:

Below are questions tutors can ask learners to help them focus on their goals. Reaching these goals may or may not require literacy instruction.

- What do you like to do? What are your hobbies? What do you do in your free time for fun?
- Are there things that you would **like** to do that you cannot do right now?
- Are there things that you need to do that you cannot do now?
- Do any of the things you want to do include learning reading, writing, or math?
    - What do you need to read to do the things you want or need to do?
    - What do you need to write to do the things you want or need to do?
    - What do you need to learn in math to do the things you want or need to do?
    - If you do not require reading, writing, or math skills to do the things you want or need to do, a literacy program may not be right for you at this moment.

Adapted from:
Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual*. Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, September, 1998, p. 59.

"Learners found the concept of prioritizing goals hard to grasp. Setting goal dates was an impossibility, as the learners both felt they were capable of doing most things until questioned further and then would admit they didn't. When asked what their goals were, both learners expressed very ambitious long-term goals, such as obtaining a driver's license, GED, acquiring a job, etc. It was explained to them that in order to achieve these goals, they would have to start thinking a little smaller and they agreed they would need to learn to read, write and spell better before they could jump into the bigger goals."

Wanda Vargo
Kipling & District Association for Handicapped Adults, Kipling, SK

Goal Setting Activities:

One discussion thread found on the AlphaPlus web site covers the topic of goal setting for adult literacy learners. Here are some ideas that may help learners to think about their personal learning goals:

- **Snakes and Ladders:** This old game is adapted to facilitate goal setting. The end is the "goal." The learners must identify all the existing and possible "snakes" along the path. Next, learners identify the appropriate "ladders" to get around the related "snakes." Blank game boards are photocopied and then filled in. This activity is more interesting than, say, writing out lists.
- **Specific Goal Cards:** A set of cards is created, with each one having a specific goal written on it, such as opening a bank account, making change, following recipes, reading stories to children, following a map, reading in church, writing a grocery list, and so on. The learners divide the cards in to a "Yes" pile and a "No" pile, based on wants, needs, interests, or current abilities. Tutors may have to help the learners read the cards. Even learners who had trouble expressing their goals initially were better able to prioritize some literacy related goals through this exercise. Alternatively, goal checklists can be used instead of cards.

- **Goal Spiders:** Learners write one of their goals inside a circle on the middle of a blank page. Then, with the assistance of the tutors, the learners determine the smaller steps needed to reach that goal. Each step is written from the circle's edge outward, forming the legs of the "goal spider." This exercise is fun and memorable for the learners.

- **Wish List:** Tutors ask learners the following question, "What would you dare to do, if you knew you could not fail?" Tutors encourage any answers and write them down. This really spurs creativity. The learners and tutors then choose the ones that they want to work toward together.
- **Goal Thermometer:** The steps toward a larger goal are written from bottom to top beside a diagram of a thermometer. When smaller goals are achieved, the bulb and stem are coloured in up to that point. This is a visual indicator of progress for both learners and tutors.
- **Goal Mapping:** Tutors choose one of the important goals their learning partners have chosen for themselves. Tutors discuss the steps that will be necessary to achieve the goals. For example, learning to read recipes involves knowing fractions, cooking and food vocabulary, and following sequences of directions. Once known, the steps are drawn into a map that depicts the path from one step to the next.

Remember to always try to help your learner to set attainable goals! Avoid discouragement! Your own goals for the learner must be set aside!

5.4 Learning Styles

When assessing learners, it is important that you consider their different learning styles. Knowing how individuals learn best is valuable information for a literacy tutor, who then teaches in favour of those styles. Specific learning strategies are helpful once dominant learning styles are identified. Learners may be able to partially compensate for weaknesses and capitalize on their learning strengths by combining multiple favoured learning styles.

Descriptions and Strategies

Three learning styles are discussed here:

Tactile Learner

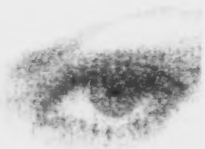
- **Description:** These learners prefer hands-on, activity-based learning. They may memorize by writing things over and over again. They may also be restless in the class or other learning environments.
- **Strategies:** Incorporate movement into learning, either by taking regular breaks, or relocating for each aspect of a lesson. Standing while working may help. A decorated workspace retains interest levels. Following the text using a ruler or finger may help the learners concentrate.

Visual Learner

- **Description:** These learners are good at remembering visual details, and may follow along when someone else is reading aloud. Seeing what is to be learned is best. Written or demonstrated instructions are grasped somewhat more easily. Sometimes these learners have difficult following lectures and so on. Remember that body language / facial expressions convey meaning.
- **Strategies:** Use visual materials, such as pictures and maps. Keep in sight of your learners, so they are able to read your body language and facial expressions. Highlighters or coloured film make important text stand out. Illustrate stories, or use multimedia options, such as video or computers. Quiet working environments may be best.

Auditory Learner

- **Description:** These learners enjoy oral discussions with their tutors and others. They may study by repeating things aloud. Oral explanations are comprehended the best. Auditory learners may "talk through" the tasks they are performing.
- **Strategies:** Discuss activities before, during, and after doing them. Learners could write and practice speeches and presentations on topics of interest. Tape recording information may be helpful for learning. Text should be read aloud, and musical jingles aid in memorization. Having someone dictate the learners' stories may be very effective for their literacy learning.



Repetition and reinforcement are very helpful with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. By always teaching activities in different ways, utilizing two or more different learning styles, the learner may retain information better. Tutors should never rely on only one learning style with their learners.

Sources:

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, September, 1998., p. 18.

"Learning Styles & Multiple Intelligence," LD Pride Online
http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm

5.5 Ongoing Assessment

Ongoing assessment demonstrates to learners that they are capable of learning and are actually learning. Some learners will really need to be convinced of this. Since progress is usually slower for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities, their gains will be observable only if continually monitored. Some methods to record progress are through regular observation, informal questioning, tutoring logs, and portfolios.

Regular Observation

There are many "checklists" that tutors could use in an initial assessment with the learners they are working with. Sometimes these are intimidating for the learners, because of their complexity, length, or unfamiliarity.

Often it is better for tutors to become familiar with the questions in the checklists, and then discover the answers over a longer period of time. This is done through informal discussion with others, discovering the learners' histories, and observing the performance of the learners. These observations should always be recorded for future reference.

Informal Questioning

Tutors assess the learners' progress by testing their skills through informal discussion in different environments. For example, if an individual learner says he is tired, the tutor may then ask a question such as, "When did you go to bed?" The answer may reveal how well this learner is grasping time telling skills. Such informal questioning should fit within the context of the current conversation. The information gathered through this method should also be recorded for future reference.

Tutoring Log

Take notes after each lesson, so that you have an ongoing record of what activities you attempted, and which were successful. Learner gains should be recorded, no matter how apparently small they may seem. Here is an example:

> "Today, Joleen assembled the pictures she had cut out into a story. I couldn't have asked for the session to go better than it did! Joleen was so excited and had so many terrific ideas. She would first arrange the pictures one way and then another, to change the story. Joleen had more ideas than would fit on the page. I wrote out Joleen's story and then she copied it, but she added some things on her own. I noticed that the pictures Joleen cut out were more household-type products, with few pictures of people. As one of Joleen's long-term goals is to live in her own house, her choices were in keeping with her interests. Joleen was very proud of the story she wrote."
>
> **Wanda Vargo**
> Kipling & District Association for Handicapped Adults, Kipling, SK

Tutors should review the notes frequently, both for themselves, and together with learners.

Portfolios

A portfolio is physically a file folder or large manila envelope that contains representative samples of a learner's work. By collecting the work in one place, the learners and tutors easily see how much effort has been made over the course of the program. Each item should be dated. Progress and accomplishment are shown over time. In terms of goal setting, the portfolio shows the learners how far they have come and how far they have to go to reach particular targets or outcomes.

Reviewing and reflecting upon the portfolio should be done every 6-8 weeks. Seeing progress is very motivating for both the learners and the volunteer tutors. Recurring difficulties may also become apparent. A plan to tackle the difficulties should be discussed.

5.6 Further Resources

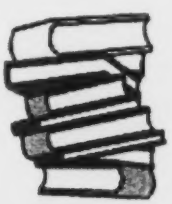
Below is a list of resource materials, most of which feature sections on assessment appropriate for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Each entry includes a brief synopsis. Important assessment topics found in the resource are listed afterward. The information may prove helpful to tutors and instructors, and beneficial to learners.

Additional resources on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities are provided in the Bibliography section of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*.

RESOURCES

Christa E. van Kraayenoord (Ed.). *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities.* Brisbane: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992.

This item describes some of the procedures used to assess learners with intellectual disabilities in reading, spelling, dictation, writing, language, and mathematics for a literacy project in Australia. The four Appendices supplement this discussion, and allow some of the tests to be repeated. Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 cover word lists. Appendix 3 is a "Mathematical Skills Checklist," and Appendix 4 is a "Survey of Literacy Interest." It should be noted that some of the materials use words that would only be familiar to Australian English speakers.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Numeracy



Debbie Baker. *A Plain Language Guide in Reading, Writing and Math.* Kentville, NS: Partners in Employment Outreach, Spring 1998.

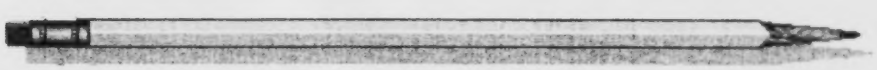
This information was produced by the Partners in Employment Outreach – Adult Literacy Program, which focuses on learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Their interviewing and screening procedures and how to conduct them are very clearly outlined. A "Reading Interest Inventory," a "Writing Interest Inventory," and a "Math Interest Inventory" are included.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Goal Setting / Interests

Frances Shannon. *Teaching Basic Workplace Literacy Skills to Employees with Intellectual Disabilities: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Teaching Strategies.* Orange, New South Wales, Australia: Western Institute of TAFE, Orange College, 1995.

This document generally describes the best ways to teach workplace language, literacy and numeracy skills to employees with intellectual disabilities. The second chapter discusses the assessment process in the workplace setting. A screening test of several basic work-related language, literacy and numeracy skills is included.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Workplace Literacy

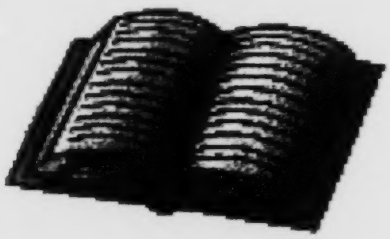
Frontier College, *Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning.* Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

An important section is entitled: "Evaluating Progress." This section of the handbook is not specifically aimed at tutors working with learners with intellectual disabilities; however, the advice remains valid. It discusses initial learner assessment for the beginning literacy learner. It also discusses the following continuing assessment techniques: (1) regular review; (2) learner journal; (3) observation; (4) self-evaluation; (5) progress reports; (6) learning plan forms; and (7) portfolio assessment.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment; Ongoing Assessment



Gerard Giordano. *Literacy Programs for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc., 1996.

This book provides technical information on formal assessment testing. Most important, however, is the section entitled "Background Information," which includes forms that may be used to discover the likes and dislikes of learners. Such information will allow you to prepare lessons that are interesting to your learners. Also important is the section on "Assessing Functional Reading," which also includes helpful forms and worksheets. Related materials are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Goal Setting / Interests



Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

This document provides an early assessment tool to help literacy practitioners and front line workers to gain more knowledge about the literacy skills of clients / learners with developmental disabilities. The assessment tool will be useful for clients to prepare them to enter a literacy agency or to further develop their personal literacy skills. In addition, the tool would also be used to assess barriers experienced by adults who wished to attend literacy programs. The Initial Literacy Assessment Profile (ILAP) attempts to identify the 'common elements' found in a variety of assessment documents related to basic literacy programs. It is meant to provide basic information about the potential adult learner with developmental disabilities prior to entry to a literacy agency. The detailed case studies are useful.
Important Topics: Goal Setting / Interests; Ongoing Assessment

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Working with Learning Outcomes for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, October 1999.

The Literacy and Basic Skills Sections of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, literacy agencies, and practitioners are establishing a Learning Outcomes approach for literacy across that province. It is a goal-directed assessment process. The Learning Outcomes Matrix is divided into three domains: Communication, Numeracy, and Self-Management. The purpose of this document is to identify the ways in which "Demonstrations of the Learning Outcomes" could best enhance success for adults with developmental disabilities in literacy programs. The demonstrations are not tests, but a means of being accountable to the learner. They are examples that will assist you in identifying success. The document features several case studies of learners.
Important Topics: Goal Setting / Interests; Numeracy; Ongoing Assessment

Literacy Ontario. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998.

The appendices of this publication outline some of the assessment techniques successfully used by various programs in Ontario that are inclusive of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, Ongoing Assessment

Maureen Sanders. *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991.

This document describes an inclusive literacy program in Edmonton. The section entitled "How Were They Assessed?" generally describes the assessment process this program used with their learners. The discussion may serve as a model for the assessment of learners in your agency.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment

Patti O'Haire, Pamela Phillips, and Kathy Browers. *An Implementation Guide for* Beyond the Classroom*: Community-Based Instruction for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools.

The primary goal of Beyond the Classroom is to provide an effective education program for adults with developmental disabilities that will assist them to develop the skills necessary to successfully live and work in the community. This document includes several assessment forms and checklists. The relevant sections are entitled: "Documentation" and "Appendix A – Forms."
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Goal Setting / Interests; Workplace Literacy; Ongoing Assessment

Pinellas County Schools. *Bridging the Gap: Workplace Literacy for Developmentally Disabled Adults.* Boca Raton, FL: Florida Adult and Community Education Network (ACENET), 1991.

This manual was developed to meet the job-specific education needs of supported employees. Two different sample literacy audits are included to assist tutors to conduct their own job-specific assessments of learners.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Workplace Literacy

Regina Public Library. *Adult Literacy Tutor Training Manual.* Regina, SK: Regina Public Library, June 1996.

This manual was not written specifically for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities, but the assessment advice is helpful when working with adults who have a very low literacy level. "Initial Assessment" and "Ongoing Assessment" are discussed. Appendix A contains assessment tools that could be used with your learners.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment; Ongoing Assessment

Shelby McClintock. *Idea Book for Volunteer Tutors.* State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

This work contains some assessment techniques that have been developed in Pennsylvania specifically for learners with developmental disabilities. Important sections are entitled: "Goal Discovery," "Goal Mapping," "Learner Portfolio," and "I Like, I Can, I Am." An important component of assessment is setting goals for learners and tutors. These provide the benchmark for evaluating progress. Helpful checklists are included. Goal mapping develops paths toward reaching goals. A learner portfolio is one of the best ways to keep track of ongoing learner progress.
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Goal Setting / Interests; Ongoing Assessment

Susan Devins. *Math in Daily Life.* Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1994.

This chapter provides general numeracy assessment advice. It includes the Literacy Partners of America, Inc. "Math Screen" and "Tutor's Checklist." It also includes PROSPECT's "Math Screen." More helpful in terms of initial assessment may be the "Inventory of Skills Checklist."
Important Topics: Initial Assessment, including Numeracy

Section 6

Literacy Activities

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Section 6

Literacy Activities

6.1 Introduction

Literacy tutors are always searching for activities to try together with their learners. This is especially true of those working with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

LITERACY ACTIVITIES

This section of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* offers many suggestions. The suggestions are grouped according to topics especially relevant to this learner population, including:

- Emergent literacy;
- Sight words;
- Phonemic awareness and phonics;
- Language experience approach

Activities for one-on-one tutoring and group tutoring are presented separately, although many of the ideas can be adapted for both teaching situations. This section concludes with a detailed listing of further resources.

6.2 Emergent Literacy Skills

Emergent literacy refers to the reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy. Emergent literacy is concerned with the earliest phases of literacy development. This is the period between birth and the time when a person reads and writes as it these skills are conventionally understood. Emergent literacy skills are learned, and a proper environment fosters the development of these skills. This process is gradual, but may be relatively longer for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

Demonstrations of emergent literacy are (1) attempts at oral language; (2) initial attempts at reading, usually interpreting pictures and (3) initial attempts at writing, usually scribbling. These activities are legitimate beginnings of literacy and, as such, should be encouraged.

Some emergent literacy skills related to reading and writing are the following:

- Understanding the sounds that correspond to the letters of the alphabet (See the segment on Phonemic Awareness in this section of this *Handbook*.)
- Understanding how to handle a book
- Understanding how to hold and use a pencil
- The ability to distinguish shapes (visual discrimination)
- Understanding the order of the alphabet
- Understanding that speech can be turned into print, and print can be read aloud, like speech
- Understanding various conventions of print, like the shapes of letters, the names of letters, punctuation, that spaces separate words, etc.

These skills are more complex than the above list may reveal. For example, understanding how to handle a book written in English includes many things:

- Holding the book so that the print is easy to see and the person is comfortable
- Holding the book the correct way, so that the top, bottom, front cover and back cover can be distinguished
- Turning one page at a time, which is moving the right-side page over the previous left-side page
- Learning where on the page to begin reading
- Understanding that print is read in a certain direction (left to right), and once one line is read, you move to the line below
- Understanding page numbering
- The vocabulary related to books, such as book, cover, page, sentence, paragraph, etc.

All of the components of emergent literacy skills should be considered and taught.

Three important things that can be done to promote emergent literacy skills are:

- **Reading to the New Learner:** Being read to regularly is important to the literacy development of these adult learners. The listener is able to get a "feel" for the flow, nature, and patterns of the written word. The listener will become aware of the different sounds of English, and these will become individually distinguishable. In all cases, the reader and learner should discuss what has been read.
- **Visiting the Library:** Adult learners should be comfortable visiting their local library, and finding their way around. It is an important source of information and resources for people of all economic and educational backgrounds. Resources include books, videos, taped books, computers, and so on. The library may be the perfect place to teach one of the most important emergent literacy skills – the joy of reading.

- **Home Environment:** Individuals learn a lot about reading and writing by observing the reading and writing that occurs in their home environment. It is important that learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities witness others using literacy skills. When modelling literacy, it should be emphasised that reading has a purpose and meaning. Reading is done to get something done, and not just skills to be learned in isolation. It is important that families and caregivers in every setting are aware of emergent literacy and make an effort to provide the adult learner with a literacy-rich environment. Books, newspapers, magazines and a variety of writing materials should be available.

See the segment Home Support of Skills in the Keys to Success section of this *Handbook* for important advice.

6.3 Sight Words

Sight words are those words recognized instantly because we have become so familiar with them over time. Examples are *come*, *add*, *mother*, *I*, and *am*. We do not have to "sound out" the syllables each time we attempt to read the same word. For learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities who have poorer levels of phonic skills, learning words by sight becomes very important.

SIGHT WORDS

Here are a few activities that help learners build their sight word vocabulary:

- **Word Search / Crossword Puzzles:** These puzzles help learners to recognize and learn important words, since they are searching for each letter in the word. The sight words in the word bank should be discussed with learners, so that meanings are understood. Once meanings are clear, the same list is made into a crossword puzzle. There are numerous computer software programs on the market that allow you to make your own puzzles. Otherwise, photocopied puzzle blanks are easily filled in. A puzzle should be customized to the set of sight words currently important to your learner. This activity won't even seem like work!
- **Flash Card Inventories:** When learners learn a new sight word, it is written on a blank card. As more and more sight words are learned, the stack of cards grows thicker. This demonstrates that progress is being made, and the words should be reviewed regularly. Writing a sentence that uses the sight word in context is a good idea, as well. Pasting on a small picture of the sight word (when possible) helps the learner, too.
- **Personal Word Dictionary:** Similar to a word card inventory, the learner writes important sight words in a notepad or diary. The pages are divided alphabetically, and the words placed in the appropriate section. Again, this makes it simple for learners to practise those sight words they feel are important to learn. (Personal word dictionaries are helpful for learning words that are not strictly sight words, too.)

"Joleen kept a personal dictionary and added her own words, as well as any she had trouble with during the sessions. She would often remark that she wanted a specific word in her dictionary. One day when we had a few extra minutes at the end of a session, I asked her to spell several words from her dictionary. She made no mistakes and was very proud of that."

Wanda Vargo
Kipling Industries, Kipling, SK

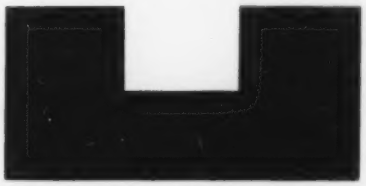
- **Circle the Word:** Many words are similar visually. For this reason, learners will have to concentrate on letter and word shapes to recognize a particular sight word correctly. A good idea is to make a list of similarly appearing words, and then have learners circle particular words amongst them. Here is one example:

NAME	MANE	NAME	MAN	MEAN

A variation of this activity is asking learners to pick out specified words from an appropriate passage of text, as well. (A similar exercise can be used to help learners distinguish similarly shaped letters of the alphabet.)

- **Signage:** Many sight words are important to learn because they are related to survival or functioning in the community. Taking a stroll with learners to pick out signs with these important sight words is often very helpful. The words are then learned in their actual context, which will help learners retain the knowledge. Examples are signs for restaurant chains, the words and symbols used to distinguish public washrooms, safety signs, such as stop signs, crosswalks, and exit signs.

- **Squaring:** Emphasizing the word configuration is helpful in teaching sight words. The word is printed out, and then it is "squared" or "boxed" by drawing straight lines around its shape. For example, when it is done with the word *bed*, the outline shape sort of looks like a bed. Looking at the general shape of a word rather than just the details of each letter is helpful for visual learners.



"It's most helpful for visual learners – spelling is done most successfully by people who picture the word. Some people need to write down a word and look at it to see how to spell it. Others picture it mentally."

Lisa Hammett Vaughan, Coordinator
Community Employment Services, The Flower Cart, Kentville, NS

Sources:

"Sight Words" found on the *Instructional Strategies for the Emergent Reader* web site [http://www.ash.udel.edu/incoming/east1/emergent/phonem.html]

The Frontier College Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning. Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

6.4 Phonemic Awareness and Phonics

Phonemic awareness is having the understanding that words are composed of one or more individual sounds. Words often can be more easily read by "sounding them out" using phonics skills.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND PHONICS

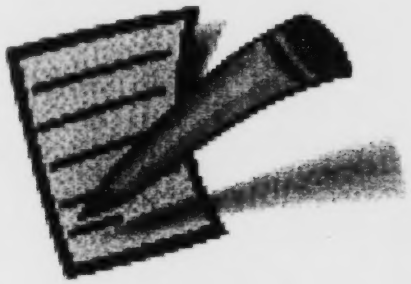
There are forty distinct sounds in the English language, and words are comprised of combinations of these sounds. The sounds are represented by letters or set patterns of letters. For example, the initial sound in the words *forklift* or *phobia* can be represented by 'f' or 'ph.' Being able to make these sound-symbol connections is an important key to becoming able to read independently.

Here are some related activities that can help build phonemic awareness and phonics skills:

- **Tutor Reading Aloud:** The tutor can read aloud, while following along with the text using a finger. Learners will listen while watching which letters and words the tutor is reading. The listener may become more aware of the different sounds of English.
- **Choral Reading:** The tutor and a learner each read aloud at the same time. This way, the learner hears the correct sounds corresponding to particular letters or words, while being able to make the sounds at the same time. The tutor serves as a reading model.
- **Echo Reading:** The tutor reads a passage from a page while the learner follows along. Then, the learner is asked to reread the same passage. This activity works best once the learner has gained confidence in doing the previous two activities.

Letter – sound matching can be practised in these ways:

- **Word Lists:** A helpful activity is generating word lists that begin with the same letter / sound. The tutor identifies the sound, and learners orally recite the words they know. Otherwise, the tutor identifies the sound, and has learners pick out words from a passage of text that start (or end) with the same sound.



- **Rhyming:** Words that rhyme sound similar – and are often spelled similarly – except for the beginning letter or letters. Studying rhyming words emphasizes that a change in sound (phoneme substitution) can alter the meaning of similarly spelled words drastically. Plus, learners who can read the word *car* can easily build their vocabulary by learning phonograms like *far* and *bar*. This is learning by analogy, using word families. Generating word lists of rhyming words is one activity. Tutors can have a set of pictures, and have learners match the pictures whose names rhyme. Tutors can create sentences that contain rhyming words, such as, "Whenever he sat in a boat, Billy would bring his mat and his coat."
- **Blending:** Practise the individual sounds. Then ask learners which word is formed by combining a series of individual sounds. For example, tutors can ask learners, "What word is made by combining /b/ (the b-sound), the /a/ (the soft a-sound), and /g/ (the hard g-sound)?" This activity can be accomplished using letters on flash cards. They are arranged to form words, once the sounds of each are practised.

- **Sound Counting:** Say a particular word, and then ask learners how many different sounds they hear. The learners then write down the letter or letters that correspond to the sound. That being done, the learners attempt to spell the word. This activity teaches a strategy we all use to spell words that we find new.

- **Sound Isolation:** Show the learners a word, and ask what sound is heard at the beginning, the sound in the middle and / or the final sound.
- **Invented Spelling:** Encouraging learners to write independently is an excellent way to promote phonemic awareness. The learners should write their ideas, regardless of whether or not they have become confident spellers. By writing new words based on their sounds (invented writing), learners will think about these important sound-symbol associations.
- **Slow & Fast:** Say a particular word by emphasizing each distinct sound that comprises the word (slow way, segmentation) – an example is "f-oo-t-b-a-ll." Then read the word like you would naturally read it (fast way, blending) – *football*. Learners will deliberately think about the different sounds in a word, as well as learn how to pronounce them in natural speech.
- **Letter Subtraction:** Discuss word variations using 'mathematical' concepts. For example, tutors can say, "The word 'flat' minus 'l' equals what?" or "The word 'monkey' minus 'k' spells what word?" If correct, learners will answer, "Fat" and "Money."

FLAT – L = FAT

MONKEY – K = MONEY

- **Sound Differentiation:** Using pre-recorded sounds (as examples, a bell or a police siren), ask learners to listen to and identify the sounds. Encourage the learners to try to reproduce the sounds. Play two sounds in a row, and ask the learners if they are the same or different. Eventually, progress to identifying, reproducing, and differentiating language sounds, such as the initial 't' and 'd' in *table* and *dartboard*. A recording won't be necessary for the sounds of English.
- **I Spy:** This is a classic word game, perfected on long car rides. Ask learners to identify an object that begins with a certain sound. Begin with the phrase, "I spy with my little eye something that begins with B." Have the learners guess objects, until they choose the correct one. Looking at pictures or mail order catalogues instead of the immediate environment is another way to play this game. The learners and tutors should take turns. To make it more challenging, choose two objects or three objects instead of one, ask for ending sounds instead of beginning sounds, make sentences with each object word, and / or choose rhyming words, and see if they can be spotted, too. The game can be played by asking learners to identify objects of different shapes – this will be a good lead in to teaching the different shapes of the letters of the alphabet.

- **Hands Up!:** Reading a passage of text, have learners raise a hand (or ring a bell or stomp) each time a particular sound of English is made by the tutor. The tutor should know the correct number beforehand. The activity is repeated until the sound is heard every time.

Order

The sounds of English should be taught in a particular order. Begin by teaching the consonants that have only one sound (**b, d, f, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, t, v, w, x,** and **z**). Then teach the vowels (**a, e, i, o,** and **u**). Follow this by teaching the common consonant digraphs, which are a combination of consonants which form a new sound (**ch** as in chip, **sh** as in ship, **th** as in theatre, and **wh** as in whip). Once these are mastered, more complicated letter combinations can be taught, such as letters having two different sounds (**g, s,** and **y**).

Summary

Building on phonemic awareness and phonics skills is particularly important for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. If the learners' memory retention is very low, those individuals will not be able to learn many sight words. They will have to "sound out" the same words almost every time they encounter them in print. (Words that are phonetically irregular may be constantly difficult.) Building these skills then becomes vital.

Once sound-symbol recognition skills are built, the adult learners will be more prepared to tackle reading unfamiliar words.

Sources:

"Phonics and Phonemic Awareness" found on the *Saddleback Valley Unified School District* web site [http://www.svusd.k12.ca.us/resources/distpub/Phonics.stm]

"Phonemic Awareness" foundon the *Instructional Strategies for the Emergent Reader* web site [http://www.ash.udel.edu/incoming/east1/emergent/phonem.html]

"Phonemic Awareness – What is it?" found on the *Phonemic Awareness* web site, sponsored by the Embracing Engaged Learning Professional Development Project [http://www.d118.s-cookk12.il.us/el/westarts/phonemic.htm]

Community Learning Scotland (formerly known as the Scottish Community Education Council), *Moving Ahead: A New Handbook for Tutor Helping Adults with Learning Difficulties.* Edinburgh: Community Learning Scotland, 1995.

Shelby McClintock. *Idea Book for Volunteer Tutors.* State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

6.5 Language Experience Approach

Introduction

In the Language Experience Approach, learners dictate their ideas to their tutors, who write them down. Each learner-tutor pair will then have an appropriate text to work from. The learner has control of the text from which she learns. Since the words belong to her, the text will be both interesting and comprehensible. This provides a good starting base to teach specific literacy skills.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

By creating an appropriate text, the learner-tutor pair overcomes one of the barriers to literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities – the shortage of appropriate published written materials. (For more on this, see the Written Materials segment in the Keys to Success section of this *Handbook*.)

The key is the use of personal experiences and oral language. The learners may not have formal education or yet have the ability to write themselves, but they will have a wealth of life experience that can be instrumental in their future learning.

An advantage of the Language Experience Approach is that all of the literacy skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – are involved.

How It is Done

There are several points to remember and steps to follow when doing a language experience text:

- **Comfort:** It is important that the tutor and learner are comfortable with each other before attempting to create a language experience text, since the learners are being asked to share of themselves – their ideas, experiences, and feelings.

- **Topic:** The learner should choose a topic, and the pair should discuss that topic extensively. If the learner hesitates to choose a topic, make some general suggestions, such as what they did the day before, what their pet is like, or what they think about a hobby. Pictures from magazines or reading a short newspaper article trigger ideas.

- **Discussion:** Once a topic is settled on, the tutor asks informational questions, to encourage the learner to provide additional detail. The tutor should also always be encouraging of what the learner wants to say. If the learner needs time to gather or express their thoughts, wait patiently. This "brainstorming" establishes the context through conversation.

- **Position:** Sitting side by side is advised, so that the learner sees what is written. Associating their words with the symbols being placed on the paper is very important for learners in the earliest literacy stages.

- **Dictating:** Very simply, as the learner tells a story, the tutor writes it down word for word, exactly as dictated. For example, use 'shoulda' instead of 'should have.' What is written must correspond with the sounds of what is spoken. Every once in awhile, the tutor should read back what was written so far, so that it sounds the way the learner wants it to.

- **Revision:** Once the story is complete, the tutor and learner should go over the story again and edit it. The choices as to what to change, to add, or to take out must remain the learner's.

Examples

Here are four writing samples by adult literacy learners:

Easter at Home

by Allen Gilbertson

We went to my grandma's for supper. We looked at pictures. I saw pictures of Mom when she was small.

We have new calves on the farm. I checked the corrals to see if there were more babies. Some are still coming.

I helped my Mom clean the house. I dusted the T.V. I took the garbage out. I washed the windows.

I cleaned the yard with my Dad. We threw old boards out.

I like going home for Easter.

Carrier of the Week

by Allen Gilbertson

I work at the Humboldt Journal on Friday. I put the bundles of paper in bags. I put the bags on a truck. We take the bags to houses. I help Audrey put the bags into the garages.

I do my paper route on Saturday. I deliver the Traders to 21 houses. I get paid for the number of papers I deliver.

The second story was inspired by a newspaper announcement that declared the author "Carrier of the Week." A photograph was included.

My Surgery
by Elaine

I went for surgery Thursday morning. They put a mask around my face and I went to sleep. I woke up before dinner. I was groggy. My stomach hurt. I had soup and Jello for supper.

Suzanne came to visit. When I went to sleep, Suzanne left.

Friday afternoon I went home. I can move a little bit. I was scared but I feel better now.

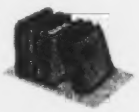
Easter 2000
by Adaline Menz

Marilyn, Martha and I went to Holy Thursday Mass in the evening. We dipped our hands in holy water.

We three went to Good Friday Mass at 3 o'clock. We touched the cross.

We three went to Holy Saturday Mass in the evening at 9 o'clock.

We three went to Easter Sunday Mass in the morning. It was at 11 o'clock. We brought up food to get blessed.



Learner writings and names used with permission.

Related Activities

The transcribed narratives are used as the basis for several literacy activities.

- **Reading:** The tutor reads learners' writings back to them. It is important that the tutor points to each word as it is read. The tutor should also read with natural expression, pausing for punctuation, emphasising key words, etc. An individual sentence is read to the learner. The same sentence is read along with the learners. Next, the learners attempt to read the sentence alone, after the tutor reads it first. Finally, the learners may want to read sentences without prompting. Repetition and predictable text are helpful to the learners.
- **Sentence Scramble:** Individual sentences from learner writings are written onto cards. Learners then arrange the cards to match the original.
- **Related Reading:** Other reading material on topics similar to learners' own writings will retain their interest and motivation. Tutors should always be trying to learn as much as possible about the learners.
- **Taping Learner Narratives:** Learners read their stories or narratives into a tape recorder with or without assistance. Listening to the tape enables them to practice reading their compositions on their own.

- **Cloze Exercises:** This is a fill-in-the-blank activity, where individual words in learners' sentences are replaced by a line of the same length. A word bank containing the removed words should be written at the bottom of the page. Based on the context of the sentence, and using the word bank, learners complete the partial sentences. A similar exercise is done with individual words, where learners need to provide the missing letter.

- **Flash Cards:** Words that learners struggle with (chosen by learners, based on their own needs) are printed on flash cards. Learners could practice reading the words. Some easy words should be put on cards, too. If possible, pictures illustrating the words are pasted on the back of the cards. Sentences composed by the learners using the words correctly and in context could also be written on the backs. The learners and tutors do drill exercises. Some easy words should be flashed first, to build learners' confidence. When the words are read correctly, the learners are given the flash cards. The pile of correct cards will be a tangible evidence of progress. The number of correct responses should also be recorded, as part of a portfolio assessment.
- **Personal Dictionary:** Words that learners struggle with are written in a notebook. A separate page or two should be labelled with each letter of the alphabet, so that the words are placed in alphabetical order. An address book works great, too. Skills gained using the personal dictionary will translate into using published dictionaries, an important reading strategy.

- **Word Processor:** The language experience texts are typed into the computer as the learners dictate them. This may retain the learners' interest more than simply writing the text, since computer usage is an important modern skill. Editing the text will be easier, too, since the final draft will not need to be rewritten. Eventually, the word processor's spell checker is used to learn the correct spelling of words. This is less discouraging for learners, since it is more "neutral" than having the tutor identify problems. After all, we all use the spell checker!

- **Word Searches:** The words from the language experience texts that the learners have difficulty with are used to create word search puzzles. When first trying this, the words should appear vertically (read top to bottom) and horizontally (read left to right) only, so that words are read more easily. Eventually, words are written backwards and diagonally, also.

Sources:

The Frontier College Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning. Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

Roeher Institute. *Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education.* Toronto, ON: Roeher Institute, 1993.

Maureen Sanders. *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991.

Betsy Trumpener. *Gimme Shelter!: A Resource for Literacy and Homelessness Work.* Toronto: St. Christopher House Adult Program Publications, 1997.

Kim Blevins. *The Companion to SARAW: An Exercise Workbook.* Regina, SK: Neil Squire Foundation, 1999.

6.6 Some Activities

This section outlines twenty additional activities that tutors and learners can work on together. Many have been proven to be effective with learners with intellectual /developmental disabilities. However, all learners are individuals; tutors will have to experiment to discover which literacy activities are best suited to their learning partners. The better tutors know the learners, the more easily and more successfully they be able to suggest appropriate literacy activities.

SOME ACTIVITIES

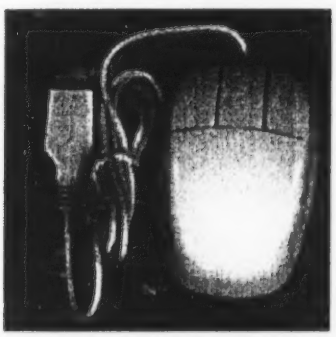
Here are some suggestions:

- **Photo-Texts:** Learners and tutors take a variety of photographs related to the learners' work or hobbies. The pictures are then placed in a photo album, and text is developed to explain the pictures. This can incorporate the Language Experience Approach.
- **Paired Reading:** Tutors read along with their learners in choral form. When approaching a familiar word, the tutors can lower their voices to allow the learners to read the word on their own. Similarly, learners can read along with taped books.

"One activity they really enjoyed was collecting articles and pictures of interest from local newspapers and making a scrapbook. Sometimes I brought some things while other times they would find it themselves. These items were used for oral reading and discussion. They treasure their scrapbooks, and we sometimes go back to reread and talk about their favourite items."

Mary Kehrig, Literacy Tutor
Humboldt, SK

- **Computer Literacy:** Working with computers captures the interest of learners, as well as motivates them. Whether it is using a simple word processor or using specific educational software, computer-based activities are often very successful. There are computer programs that read to learners, too. An example is SARAW (Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing). The repetition which computers allow benefit learners, as long as tutors continue to give encouragement and support. See the segment entitled Computer Software in the Bibliography section of this *Handbook* for some ideas.



- **Daily Journals:** Learners should be encouraged to write independently, even if writing begins with copying text. Priority should be given to writing, not to spelling every word correctly, to encourage learners to express their ideas. Daily journals are one option to promote regular writing.

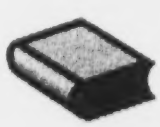
"... I asked both learners to begin keeping their own daily journals. Hopefully, this could be used to gauge any improvements in quality of writing, spelling, sentence structure. I did see improvement in both learners, perhaps more so with the learner who was quite messy and careless with her writing. She also had a habit of writing over top of her letters, and this was greatly improved."

Wanda Vargo
Kipling Industries, Kipling, SK

- **Math Manipulatives:** Hands on equipment such as counters, rods, and coins assist learners to develop counting and math skills. Learners experience more success with concrete and relevant activities.
- **Context Clue Activities:** Tutors say a sentence, leaving out the last word or two. Learners are asked to complete the sentence, based on the context. This exercise is equally effective when practised in written form.
- **Everyday Reading Activities:** Learners bring in reading materials they encounter in their daily lives. These include recipes, menus, work timetables and so on. Learning to read these materials helps the learners live and work more independently. Being relevant, learners have greater motivation to succeed in learning to read them.
- **Dictionary Exercise:** Learning how to use a dictionary is an important literacy strategy for all learners. The key to using a dictionary is an understanding of alphabetical order and of how to "sound out" the new words. To get started, take the letters from the learners' names and try to create new words. For example, the name Richard starts with the same letter as the words *red*, *rosy*, *ranch* and *rhubarb*. These words can be looked up in the dictionary. The ability to use a dictionary will facilitate independent learning by the adult learners.

prising forms with a respiratory tree — compare APNEUMONA
pneu·mo·no·ul·tra·mi·cro·scop·ic·sili·co·vol·ca·no·co·ni·o·sis \ˌn(y)ümə(ˌ)nōˌəltrəˌmīkrəˈskäpikˈsilə(ˌ)kōˌvälˈkā-(ˌ)nōˌkōnēˈōsəs\ *n* [NL, fr. *pneumon-* + ISV *ultramicroscopic* + NL *silic-* + *volcano* + *-coniosis* (fr. ²*coni-* + *-osis*)] : a pneumoconiosis caused by the inhalation of very fine silicate or quartz dust and occurring esp. in miners
pneu·mo·nec·tic \ˌn(y)üməˈnektik\ *n* -s *cap* [NL, prob. fr.

The above is one of the longest words in English! Start with something easier!



- **Poetry Activity:** Poems often use simple structures and rhyming words, so that even new readers and writers are able to create magic with words. Tutors discuss ideas with the learners, and think of the imagery associated with the ideas. They choose a simple poem format (such as haiku) and read several examples together. The imagery in these poems is discussed. Perhaps learners can draw pictures. These options will all build the learners' confidence. Once an understanding of the general structure is gained, and once imagery is chosen, it is not difficult for tutors and learners to create their own poems. Here is a sample poem:

Rain

by Dawn Kerr, Karen Margeson, Susan Weaver

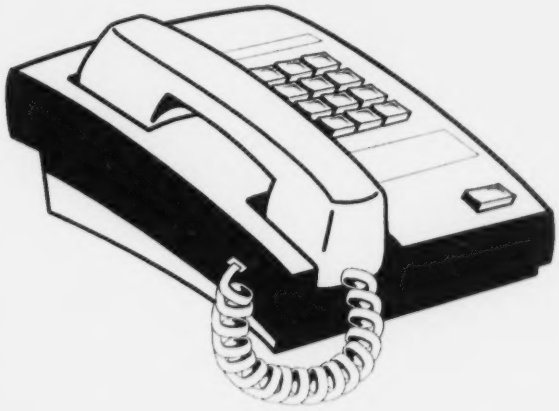
Spring ... spiders.
Leaves ... living.
Mowing the lawn.
– Hurry up, Snow, go away –
Flowers ... roses.
Rainbows ... pots of gold.
Thunderstorms ... crashes,
power goes out,
trees knocked down.
Twisters, tornadoes, high winds
... The Wizard of Oz.
Car wipers go swish, swish, swish on the glass window.
You hear the birds more.

Source:
Debbie Baker, *A Plain Language Guide in Reading, Writing, and Math.* Kentville, NS: Partners in Employment Outreach, Spring 1998, p. 2.13.

- **Cartoon Strips:** Find cartoons in the newspaper, preferably those that include adult characters. Enlarge the strip using a photocopier. Then, blank out the words from the dialogue balloons. Photocopy the cartoon again, and you are ready to begin! Ask the learners to study the cartoon frames, and ask them to fill in the dialogue, based on the context. This is a fun activity for all learners. It is best to choose cartoons with a lot of action. Alternatively, cut out the frames from an original cartoon, and ask the learners to put them in the proper sequence. This exercise will encourage the learners to look for context clues and also help the learners to gain better understanding of order and sequence.
- **Lesson Themes:** An entire lesson (or lesson unit) is tied to a single theme, such as food, sports, the country, music, and so on. Several different activities are based on that theme, such as reading texts, relating past experiences, and learning specialized vocabulary. By doing this, learners will not have to struggle with a different context for several different activities. The lessons should be tailored to the learners' stated likes and dislikes, which will spark interest and enthusiasm. Learners should choose the theme prior to the next lesson.

- **See Saw Story:** Learners and tutors write stories together. The stories are on topics chosen by the learners. Each contributes a sentence in turn. This is a great exercise, as both people are working cooperatively and equally. It is also a lot of fun, especially if the sentences take the story in interesting directions. By participating, the tutor is a model for the learners throughout the activity.

- **Collage Text:** Learners choose to illustrate the texts they've written using pictures from magazines and / or their own drawings. Pictures are chosen and cut out to match the highlights of the text. On a large piece of construction paper, the pictures are arranged and pasted. The appropriate sentences from the narrative are written under the pictures. A creative title should be placed at the top. Alternatively, with a theme in mind, the learners choose the pictures first, and then create texts using them.



- **Scripted Conversations:** Telephone conversations are scripted and rehearsed. An example would be making a doctor's appointment. It might be best to discuss what might be expected in the conversation first, and then write the script. Such role-playing makes learners more comfortable in new situations. The learners should also be encouraged to write down questions prior to making important telephone calls, to write down notes during or immediately after a telephone conversation, and to jot down important information or instructions.
- **Sentence Segments:** This is a fun creative writing exercise. Create three piles of different types of words – verbs, nouns and adjectives. Picking one word from each pile, learners make sentences using all three types of words. The parts of the sentences are learned, and creativity is challenged. Some of the sentences turn out very funny. If there's not enough laughter during your sessions together, this is an activity to try!

- **Newspaper Activities:** There are many ways that newspapers are used to assist tutors and learners. The learners read short articles, and create titles for them. Pictures are cut out, and captions are written to explain the pictures. Classified ads are written, using the newspaper to provide models. Learners examine advertisements, and the tutors ask informational questions about them, such as the price of an item. Advice columns are read, and responses to readers' questions are discussed and drafted. Plain Language newspapers are available for early readers, too.

- **Commercial Games:** There are many games on the market today that challenge literacy skills, as well as provide entertainment. Some examples are Upwords®, Scrabble®, Scattergories® and Boggle®. Although they may have some difficulty learning the rules at first, learners would probably enjoy using these games. Literacy learning will seem like less work! The letter tiles from Scrabble® are useful for activities apart from playing the game. Many of these games accommodate several players, so might also be appropriate as a group exercise.
- **Adjective Pictures:** Choose a topic that is easily drawn, such as 'butterfly' or 'flower.' Come up with words that best describe the chosen word. On a piece of art paper, draw a picture of the word, including the adjectives that describe them. For example, two words can form the antennae of the butterfly, or several words can form the petals of a flower. This is an amusing way to learn descriptive vocabulary, and the visual aspect will be very helpful for some learners.

- **Visual Verbs:** Go through magazines and catalogues, and cut out pictures of people performing actions. Learners choose verbs that best describe the actions. This activity can be done using a word bank. For a variation, learners search for appropriate pictures for a set of verbs. The verb should then be made into a sentence together. Making flash cards is another option. This type of activity may be more easily learned than having learners fill in the blanks in sentences with the correct verbs, for example. Always aim to be concrete and tangible when teaching grammar points.

These are just some of the kinds of literacy activities tutors and learners can try. Each activity can be adapted or modified in certain ways to work better for particular learners. Some activities simply will not work. Others tutors thought might not be successful may prove to be just the opposite. The lesson for tutors is to experiment freely, to tap into your own creativity, and to trust your own instincts!

Sources:

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

Roeher Institute. *Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education.* Toronto, ON: Roeher Institute, 1993.

Maureen Sanders. *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991.

Shelby McClintock. *Idea Book for Volunteer Tutors.* State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

Staff from a number of SARC agencies, who were pilot testing learning strategies and techniques with one or more learners with disabilities, suggested several activities.

6.7 Group Activities

It is sometimes difficult for a literacy program to match tutors with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Staff members in the rehabilitation or community living fields often do not have the time to work on literacy skills with their adult clients on a one-to-one basis. As such, group literacy activities may be a solution.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

There are opportunities connected to working with small groups. Skills beyond literacy, such as cooperation, sharing, and interacting are demonstrated. The social contact fights feelings of isolation. Learners are not alone with their difficulties. Energy and peer support is built. Some challenges are: the varying skill levels of participants, some learners being reluctant to work in a group, and higher level learners dominating activities.

Groups are more successful if the participants contribute to deciding what the group should do. Flexibility is extremely important. Leaders must be committed to the group and meeting times and places must be fixed.

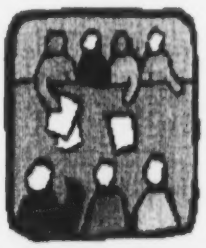
Here are some examples of group activities to try:

- **Peer Tutoring:** Higher skilled learners work with peers who have lower skills on certain activities. This really builds the confidence of the tutoring learners, and the less advanced peers may feel much more comfortable. In addition, the tutors can devote more of their time to addressing the specific learning needs of particular learners.

- **Reader's Theatre:** Drama is an effective and fun vehicle for teaching literacy skills in a group setting. Actors work on literacy skills through developing, practising, and acting out scripts. They read their scripts as part of their performances, using only their voices to project the message. Adult learners of varying literacy levels all participate – their roles are tailored to their skills, in term of length and complexity. Reader's Theatre is explained more fully in the Readings section of this *Handbook*.

- **Topic Talk:** Group members decide on a topic and discuss it. Then, for a fixed amount of time, the participants write their own thoughts, examples, or experiences on the topic. Then the participants orally share their ideas with the group. This activity is great for fuelling creativity and for building participants' confidence in speaking aloud to others.
- **Advocacy:** Making the connection between literacy and empowerment is motivating and beneficial for these learners. For example, the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary worked with a group of people with developmental disabilities to create *A Charter of Rights*. This document, which appears in the Readings section of this *Handbook*, outlines how these people would like to be treated by their families, caregivers, and others. Learning about rights, and discussing changes in policies and practices are options. Letters to the editor of the local newspaper can be drafted, and so on. People First can serve as a model for such group activities.
- **Songs:** The group sings songs they enjoy, using lyric sheets. Singing emphasizes the sounds found within words very well. Discussion centres on the meanings of particular words and on the imagery within the songs themselves. Rhyming is discussed. Singing may help with retention, especially with learners who favour an auditory learning style.

- **Chain Text:** The tutor writes the beginning sentence of a story or narrative or report on a large piece of paper, once the group of adult learners have chosen their own title and theme. One person composes the next sentence. Another person composes the following sentence, and so on. This is a very fun activity, as the writing leads in so many directions! Once the piece is written, different reading activities are tried, such as reading it aloud together, or copying it down in one's own booklet.
- **Reading Aloud:** Sometimes it is valuable for the tutor to simply read a story or other passage of text aloud, allowing learners to hear how difficult words are pronounced and how to give emphasis and colour to their reading. The tutor is serving as a reading model for the learners. Plus, the learners are given an opportunity to enjoy what reading offers, especially if they are still really struggling with their own current levels of reading ability.



- **Making a Video:** An interesting group activity is to make a video. Participants each assume different roles in the production. Working with scripts and even storyboards are interesting literacy building opportunities. Learners interview each other, requiring the development of interview questions. A Reader's Theatre production could be videotaped. The learners will love to see themselves on film. A documentary could be filmed regarding an advocacy issue that requires greater public awareness.

- **Special Events:** Interesting group outings or special guests maintain the learners' interest. These special events are the focus of one or more group literacy lessons. If the group goes to see a play, the learners describe the characteristics of the main players while the tutor writes them down. This is an opportunity to work on adjectives, the key to more colourful and descriptive sentences. Such special events ensure that learners' comprehension of the topic will be high, leading to more effective lessons related to the topic.
- **Newsletter:** Putting together a newsletter for the literacy program, sheltered workshop, group home, etc., is a fun and educational activity. Learners are thrilled when their writings are published in the newsletter for others to read. Writing, editing, illustrating, producing and distributing the newsletter are all activities that potentially teach literacy skills. Writing about themselves is empowering for adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Reading these learners' writings is educational for everyone else.

Many of the small group activities listed on these pages are also effective when working one-on-one with a learner labelled with an intellectual / developmental disability.

Sources:

Betsy Trumpener. *Gimme Shelter!: A Resource for Literacy and Homelessness Work*. Toronto: St. Christopher House Adult Program Publications, 1997.

The Frontier College Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning. Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt, *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual*. Toronto: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

6.8 Announcement

The SARC Literacy Activities Handbook

As part of its upcoming *SARC Literacy Training & Support Project*, the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres will be researching and producing a *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook*. The new resource is intended to supplement this *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*.

SARC
SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION
OF REHABILITATION CENTRES

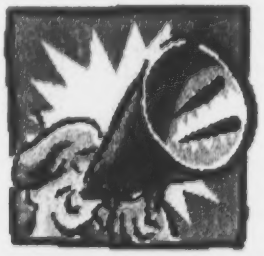
The *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook* will focus on both group and one-on-one literacy activities that have been used effectively with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. It will be practical, easy to use, and most of all, fun!

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Coming Soon!

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The *SARC Literacy Activities Handbook* should be available in the Fall of 2001.



6.9 Further Resources

Below is a list of resource materials, most of which outline literacy activities. Each entry includes a brief synopsis. The activities and the advice may prove helpful to tutors and beneficial to learners.

Additional resources on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities are provided in the Bibliography section.

RESOURCES

Angela Tessier and Carolyn Buffie (Eds.). *Homemade Literacy Ideas: Recipes for Success!* Winnipeg: Association for Community Living – Manitoba, June 1993.

In the course of a literacy project conducted at the Association for Community Living – Manitoba, it quickly became apparent that textbooks didn't have all the answers to our literacy needs. However, tutors have over the years developed some wonderful ideas and strategies by using very simple "ingredients" in the home. This document is a compilation of some of those great ideas.

Christa E. van Kraayenoord (Ed.). *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities.* Brisbane: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992.

This document describes teaching approaches in a general way. Even though specific educational language is used in many places, the ideas contained in the many sections of this publication should be very helpful.

Cindy Crichton. *Reader's Theatre for the Mentally Challenged.* Olds, AB: Project Read Soon (The Mountain View Society of Alberta), 1997.

This document lists some possible characteristics of learners, and describes some general strategies which may be helpful. Reader's Theatre is a successful group activity for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Darren Crawford and Angele Hubert. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment.* With *Facilitator's Notes* by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders. Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Literacy Association, 1995.

This project features the writing of two employees of the Edmonton Recycling Society (ERS), an organization similar to SARCAN. The Facilitator's Notes features teaching techniques that can be used with any reading materials. Techniques include: (1) pre-reading discussion, (2) listing and mapping, (3) assisted reading, (4) predicting, (5) reading and thinking aloud, (6) decoding words, (7) asking questions, (8) reader response, (9) cloze exercises, (10) language experience, (11) the writing process, (12) writing topics, (13) sight words, (14) phonics, and (15) word search.

Debbie Baker. *A Plain Language Guide in Reading, Writing and Math.* Kentville, NS: Partners in Employment Outreach, Spring 1998.

The Plain Language Guide is intended to provide the tutor with insight about the art of teaching adults labeled mentally challenged. It is a user-friendly, interactive and practical guide for anyone who uses it. The Plain Language Guide has five sections: (1) the screening and interviewing processes we use, (2) learner-written material to use in reading, (3) writing activities based on the reading material, (4) math activities, and (5) a working bibliography of materials relevant to teaching adults considered to have a mental challenge.

Frances Shannon. *Teaching Basic Workplace Literacy Skills to Employees with Intellectual Disabilities: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Teaching Strategies.* Orange, New South Wales, Australia: Western Institute of TAFE, Orange College, 1995.

This document generally describes the best ways to teach workplace language, literacy and numeracy skills to employees with intellectual disabilities. It is a thoroughly useful document for practical workplace education.

Frontier College, *Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning.* Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

Frontier College is the oldest literacy organization in Canada. This resource is a guide for literacy tutors working with adults, and has been completely revised and updated. This *Tutor's Handbook* contains many practical suggestions for tutoring adults with literacy needs. It is based on actual programs delivered by Frontier College and includes specific strategies for working with street youth, prison inmates, people with disabilities, and English as a Second Language learners. The most relevant section is entitled: "Tutoring Students with Intellectual Disabilities." In addition to providing background information, this section discusses tutoring techniques for this learner population.

Judy Simonds and Sue Laakso (Eds.). *A Study of the Provision of Adult Literacy / Numeracy to Adults with Intellectual Disabilities at the Rockhampton College of TAFE.* Brisbane: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992.

This is part of the wider Australian work, "A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities," edited by C.E. van Krayenoord. Several activities successfully used by the learners are outlined in this study.

Karen Dean, Laura Sargent, Sandra Shaffer, *We're SOLD: Strategies for Overcoming Learning Differences*, Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools, Adult and Community Education, Spring 1993.

Teachers and tutors who are knowledgeable about learning differences and effective teaching strategies can assist adults to overcome these challenges. The goal of *We're SOLD* is to increase teacher and tutor awareness and effectiveness in providing instruction to adults who have, or suspect they have, learning differences. Several of these strategies are reproduced in this document. An important section is entitled: "Language Strategies for Learning Differences."

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

This project came about because of a stated need by literacy practitioners, front-line workers and community staff who work with adults with developmental disabilities. The training manual may be used to help workers carry out a literacy assessment as well as facilitate involvement in literacy readiness training. Strategies are outlined in this document, divided according to three early literacy stages of learners with developmental disabilities. Numerous resource sheets, charts and detailed case studies are provided.

Literacy Council of Lincoln. *Training Manual for Tutors of Developmentally-Challenged Adults.* Beamsville, ON: Literacy Council of Lincoln, September 1994.

This manual was researched and compiled by professional staff, experienced tutors of special needs learners, and successful literacy learners themselves. It contains valuable guidelines for program delivery, hands-on practical advice and exercises, and helpful hints and examples. It includes teaching strategies, tips for tutors and lesson ideas. Professionals who work with "special needs" adults provide instruction on how to adapt materials and resources, deal with social skills and behaviour, communicate and develop a relationship with the learners.

Literacy Ontario. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998.

The appendices of this publication outline some of the literacy activities commonly and successfully used by various programs in Ontario that include people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Relevant sections are entitled: "Methods of Instruction," "A Program with a Purpose," "Learning Plan," "Learning Plan (Sample)," "Everyday Reading Materials," "The Assessor's Suitcase."

Maureen Sanders. *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991.

This document describes the philosophy of a literacy program in Edmonton, including effective strategies. Learners are described as being in either Stage One, Stage Two, or Stage Three. An important section is entitled: "The Tutoring Program – How it Worked."

Moving Ahead: A New Handbook for Tutors Helping Adults with Learning Difficulties. Edinburgh: Community Learning Scotland (formerly the Scottish Community Education Council), 1995.

This is a revised version of a handbook originally published by the Scottish Community Education Council in 1978. New sections have been added. However, some sections have not been totally revised and employ out-of-date vocabulary ("mental handicap") and some out-of-favour perspectives. Further, some vocabulary will be unfamiliar to speakers of Canadian English. Nonetheless, this handbook contains useful practical tips on teaching basic skills. Some relevant sections are entitled: "Axioms to Help Your Tutoring," and "Introduction to Literacy Skills."

Patti O'Haire, Pamela Phillips, and Kathy Browers. *An Implementation Guide for* Beyond the Classroom*: Community-Based Instruction for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools.

The primary goal of *Beyond the Classroom* is to provide an effective education program for adults with developmental disabilities that will assist them to develop the skills necessary to successfully live and work in the community. This document discusses instructional strategies and teaching techniques for functional academics, which include knowledge of time, calendar, sight words, safety and community signs, and personal data. Some relevant sections are entitled: "CBI Instructional Strategies," "Functional Academics," and "Appendix B – Instructional Materials."

Roeher Institute. *Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education.* Toronto, ON: Roeher Institute, 1993.

Tutors working with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities describe several literacy activities in their own words. The fourth chapter, entitled "A Sampling of Successful Instructional Methods" is helpful.

Roeher Institute. *Speaking of Equality: A Guide to Choosing an Inclusive Literacy Program for People with an Intellectual Disability, their Families, Friends and Support Workers.* Toronto: Roeher Institute, 1995.

This document, written with self-advocates in mind, describes several different literacy activities. A relevant section is entitled: "Question 13: Can you give me a list of things I would do in my class?"

Shelby McClintock. *Idea Book for Volunteer Tutors.* State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

This document contains nearly 50 teaching techniques that have been developed in Pennsylvania specifically for learners with developmental disabilities. Techniques are grouped in the following categories: (1) pre-reading, (2) reading, (3) writing, (4) speaking and listening, (5) math, measurement and money, (6) self-esteem, and (7) life skills.

Section 7

Conclusion

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Section 7

Conclusion

7.1 Overview

The *SARC Supplemental Tutor Handbook* is intended to give literacy tutors valuable information to help them help adults with disabilities to build and maintain their literacy skills.

The Conclusion section includes:

- A few recommendations for tutors, as well as touching on some wider recommendations worth considering.
- A couple of quotes that will inspire, challenge and motivate you in your literacy efforts.
- An Evaluation Form, to ensure that any possible future edition of this *Handbook* will be as helpful as possible to tutors and ultimately to learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

  Please take some time to photocopy the Evaluation Form pages, answer the questions, and then forward them to us at the address given.

Best Wishes for Tutoring and Learning Success!

7.2 Recommendations

One or two people can make a world of difference in a community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

By tutoring someone who has a disability, you are helping make a positive impact on that individual's life. However, as a tutor, you can play a larger role beyond working with an individual learner. Advocates promoting literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities are essential.

> "Unless literacy learners have a few advocates within a few different organizations, they won't be able to reach the outcomes that we're talking about and they won't be able to reach self-advocacy and safety, security and independence... ."
>
> Lisa Marie Bossert, Alberta Provincial Coordinator
> Frontier College, Edmonton, AB

How to advocate for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities:

- Encourage others to tutor a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. There is always a need for volunteers.
- Be available to others who are also working with this learner population. Meet regularly to exchange ideas, concerns, and encouragement. You can also be available to speak of your own experiences at tutor training events sponsored by your local literacy organization.
- Become even more involved with the local literacy organization. For example, you can consider joining the board. Through your involvement, you can encourage policies, resource purchases, and training that will assist you and others to better work with people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Wider recommendations are:

- The formal training of rehabilitation practitioners / staff members who will be working with people with intellectual / developmental disabilities should incorporate a literacy training component.

> "What we have found was starting to work well is looking towards the DSW (or, basically, the social work degrees), early childhood education people, those groups of students and young adults who are going that way, that are heading to a field in that area, and getting them the skills through ... a small program that's just run by Frontier College or something like that, that gets them a 'certificate in literacy skills'... ."
>
> Dr. Glenn Yates, Director
> ABILITY... Health and Social Services Consulting, Sarnia, ON

- As with all special populations, learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities should be fully considered when wider government-endorsed literacy strategies are developed.

> "Policymakers need to become aware of the literacy needs and potential of adults with developmental disabilities in order to make appropriate policy and funding decisions that fully include these adults in literacy initiatives."
>
> Karen A. Erickson, David A. Koppenhaver and David E. Yoder
> "Literacy and Adults with Developmental Disabilities," *NCAL Brief*, March 10, 1995, p. 1.

7.3 Parting Words

Literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities presents challenges and opportunities.

"It is difficult to define the limits of people with disabilities, as we continue to discover extraordinary abilities within them. While people who have developmental disabilities face a more challenging future than most, they can still enjoy a full and active life. What they need most is encouragement, understanding, and the willingness of others to help them maximize their opportunities for becoming part of their community."

– People, Inc.
[http://www.people-inc.org/AboutDe.htm]

"In short, while individuals with developmental disabilities are faced by, and present, significant challenges, they also can make substantial gains when provided appropriate learning materials and experiences."

– Karen A. Erickson, David A. Koppenhaver and David E. Yoder
Literacy and Adults with Developmental Disabilities
NCAL Technical Report TR94-15.
Philadelphia: National Center on Adult Literacy,
November 1994, p. 5.

7.4 Evaluation Form

Please take some time to photocopy and complete this Evaluation Form and return it to us. We appreciate your input and are hoping to use your comments to make improvements on this and future materials we develop.

❶ How did you learn about the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook?*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❷ In general, how do you feel about the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook?* Please circle (O) one.

❸ What did you <u>like best</u> about the *Handbook?*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❹ What did you <u>like least</u> about the *Handbook*? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❺ Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=excellent, 3=good, 5=poor).

A. Quality of the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook* _____

B. Usefulness to your program _____

C. Quality of overall writing _____

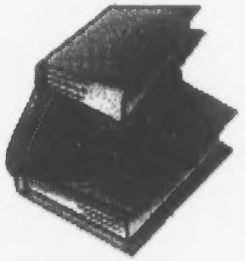
D. Relevance to field of adult education _____

E. Layout and design of product _____

F. Adaptability for different purposes _____

❻ Please give suggestions for improvement for those categories which you rated 3 or higher.

❼ Did these materials fulfill your needs? Why or why not?



❽ Do you think you need more training in this topic? Please check ☑ one.

☐ *YES* ☐ *NO* ☐ *NOT SURE*

If yes, what do you need?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❾ Would you recommend the SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook to someone else? Please check ☑ one.

☐ *YES* ☐ *NO* ☐ *NOT SURE*

Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

⑩ Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

We thank you for your comments and your time!

Please return this to:

Literacy Handbook Feedback
c/o Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC)
111 Cardinal Crescent
Saskatoon, SK S7L 6H5

You may also fax the pages to **(306) 653-3932**.

Adapted from:
Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities (Report to the National Literacy Secretariat), August 1998 and Shelby McClintock. Special Needs Training: Trainer Handbook for Volunteer Tutor Trainers. State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

Section 8

Acknowledgements

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Section 8

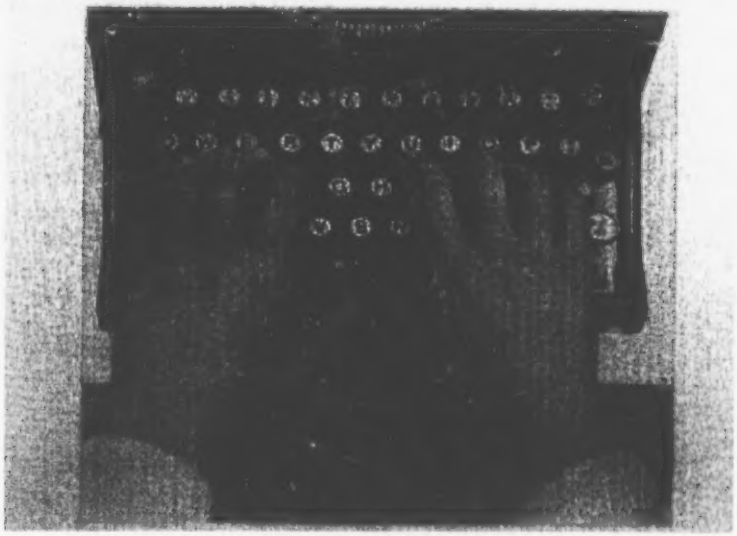
Acknowledgements

8.1 Introduction

The *SARC Supplemental Tutor Handbook* has benefited from the encouragement, advice, feedback, and generosity of many people. Their words and ideas are found in almost every page of this *Handbook*.

This Acknowledgement section is divided into several categories, based on the type of assistance provided to us. As such, some persons are rightly mentioned more than once in the following pages.

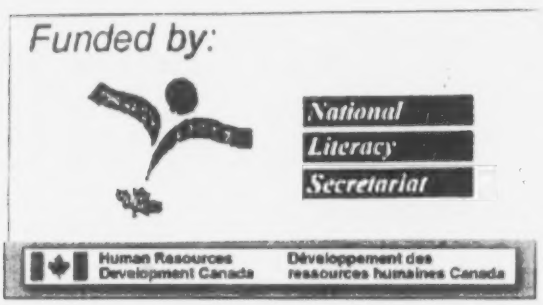
"Thank you!"



8.2 Project Funding

The SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project has been jointly funded by three major organizations:

- National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), in partnership with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (SPSEST)
- Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation (SLF), in partnership with SaskEnergy
- Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC)



Special thanks to:

Government of Canada / Government of Saskatchewan

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Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation (SLF) / SaskEnergy

SLF Board of Directors ■ Susan Clarkson, Executive Director, SLF

Ron Clark, President & Chief Executive Officer, SaskEnergy Incorporated ■ Leslie Gosselin, Advertising & Community Relations, SaskEnergy Incorporated

Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC)

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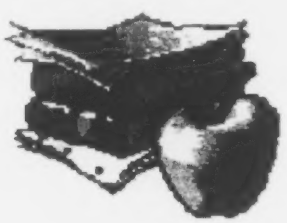

Lynne Demeule, SARC Board Member, holds a cheque for $1,600, received at the 1999 Saskatchewan Literacy Awards ceremony, held at Government House in Regina on May 12. Saskatchewan Lieutenant-Governor Jack Wiebe (left) and Mr. Ron Clark, Chief Executive Officer of SaskEnergy, look on.

8.3 Project Steering Committee

Glenn Awrey, SARCAN - Avalon Plaza (Saskatoon) ■ Lynne Demeule, SARC Board Member (Regina) ■ Marlene Dray, SARC Employee Support Services (Saskatoon) ■ Lalita Martfeld, SACL John Dolan Resource Centre (Saskatoon) ■ Lori Woiden, Interlake Human Resources (Watrous)

Thanks also to others who participated in meetings of the Project Steering Committee: Dawn Desautel, SARC Board ■ Ferne Hebert, SARC Executive Coordinator ■ Jamie Ryan, SARC Member Services

8.4 Consultation Network

Members

Suzanne Smythe, Surrey School Board / Clover Valley Industries (Cloverdale, British Columbia) ■ Dr. Christa van Kraayenoord, Fred and Eleanor Schonnel Special Education Research Centre, University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia) ■ Cindy Crichton, C.C. Consulting (Olds, Alberta) ■ Marianne Simpson, Tri-County Literacy Network (Chatham, Ontario) ■ Janet Pringle, Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (Calgary, Alberta) ■ Cindy Kugel, Invergarry Adult Learning Centre (Surrey, British Columbia) ■ Lee Tavares-Jakubec, Agassiz Independent Learning Centre (Beausejour, Manitoba) ■ Lisa Hammett Vaughan, The Flower Cart (New Minas, Nova Scotia) ■ Lisa Marie Bossert, Frontier College (Edmonton, Alberta) ■ Frances Shannon, Training Coordinator (Orange, New South Wales, Australia) ■ Glenn Yates, ABILITY... Health and Social Services Consulting (Sarnia, Ontario)

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- Normand Boutin
- Bev Lacusta

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Pictured left to right:

(Back)

- Wanda Vargo
- Angela Hein

(Front)

- Brenda Galbraith
- Joleen Daku

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We regret any possible omissions from this listing. Some materials for which we have received permission to reproduce or adapt ultimately were not included in this *Handbook*. Our gratitude extends wholly and equally to all who have assisted us in this and so many other ways.

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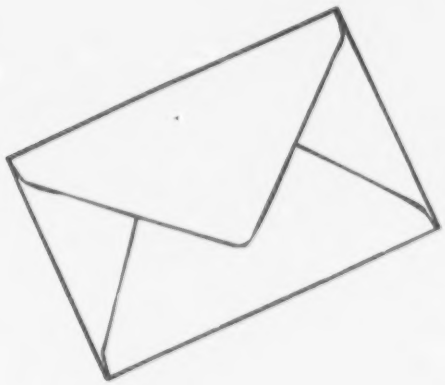
8.7 Others

SARC Administrative Support Staff

Coralee Peppard, Supervisor, Administrative Services ■ Bob Shirley, Administrative Support ■ Tracy Whitehead, Administrative Support

Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL)

Lalita Martfeld, Librarian, John Dolan Resource Centre ■ Karin Melberg Schwier, *Dialect* Editor ■ Carla Roppel, Communications Co-ordinator



Grant Application Letters of Endorsement

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Regina Public Library

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Frontier College

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Reviewers

The following people reviewed and commented upon partial or entire drafts of this *Handbook*. Their comments have led to numerous improvements.

Marlene Dray, Coordinator – Employee Support Services, Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC), Saskatoon, SK ■ Gail Douglas, Literacy Service Coordinator, Regina Public Library, Regina, SK ■ Janet Pringle, Plain Language Co-ordinator, Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI), Calgary, AB ■ Kimberley Onclin, Program Coordinator, READ Saskatoon, Saskatoon, SK ■ Dr. Christina van Kraayenoord, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, Fred and Eleanor Schonnell Special Education Research Centre, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia ■ Lisa Hammett Vaughan, Coordinator, Community Employment Services, The Flower Cart, Kentville, NS ■ Coralea Propp, Functional Academic & Volunteer Coordinator, Cosmopolitan Industries, Saskatoon, SK ■ Tracey Goller, Literacy Coordinator, Cosmopolitan Industries, Saskatoon, SK ■ Bev Yeager, Program Coordinator, Futuristic Industries, Humboldt, SK ■ Greg DeLong, Community Projects Supervisor, West Central Industries, Inc., Kindersley, SK ■ Jeanette Goohsen, Supported Independent Living Worker, Cypress Hills Ability Centres, Inc., Shaunavon, SK ■ Wanda Vargo, Kipling & District Association for Handicapped Adults, Kipling, SK ■ Angela Hein, Kipling & District Association for Handicapped Adults, Kipling, SK

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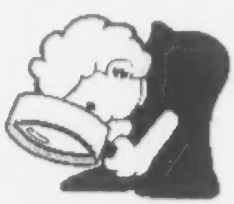
Gail Douglas ■ Janet Pringle ■ Jeanette Coombe, VRRI ■ Kimberley Ondin, ■ Lisa Hammett Vaughan



Section 9

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9.3	A Charter of Rights	PAGE 180
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Section 9

Readings

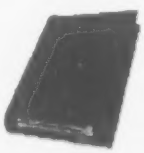
9.1 Introduction

This section contains additional readings on (or related to) the topic of literacy and people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Several of these readings are cited throughout the text of the *SARC Supplemental Tutor Handbook*.

READINGS

Here are some details on the readings in this section:

- *A Literacy Bill of Rights* was drafted by three American academics who do extensive research in this area. The piece illustrates that access to literacy instruction should be made available to all, regardless of present and future capabilities.
- *A Charter of Rights* was drafted by people with developmental disabilities in Calgary. This charter outlines how the draftees would like to be treated by their family, caregivers, and society as a whole.
- *Get Your Message Across* was written specifically for the *SARC Supplementary Tutor Handbook*. The passage discusses the importance of using appropriate written materials when working with adult learners with developmental disabilities, and explains a successful process to make written materials easier to understand.



- *Addressing Literacy Potholes* is the title of a speech given by Cindy Crichton at SARC's 2000 Annual General Meeting and Conference. The speech describes the author's experiences in literacy, and provides excellent advice and challenging food for thought.
- *What Do You See When You See Me?* is the title of an article that first appeared in *Dialect*, a publication of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL). It describes an adult learner named Francis Schaan. An afterward is included, written by Richard Lockert.
- *The Mind* is the title of a speech given by Lee Tavares-Jakubec at SARC's 1999 Annual General Meeting and Conference. The speech describes the author's experiences with an inclusive literacy program in a small town in Manitoba.
- How I Got into Literacy was written by Marlene Dray, Coordinator of Employee Support Services at SARC. In the piece, she relates the amusing story of how she found herself tutoring a man with an intellectual disability in a small Saskatchewan community.

Some of these readings may be useful as handouts at literacy tutor training events.

9.2 A Literacy Bill of Rights

A Literacy Bill of Rights

☑ All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic right to use print. Beyond this general right, there are certain literacy rights that should be assured for all persons. These basic rights are:

☑ The right to an opportunity to learn to read and write. Opportunity involves engagement in active participation in tasks performed with high success.

☑ The right to have accessible, clear, meaningful, culturally and linguistically appropriate texts at all time. Texts, broadly defined, range from picture books to newspapers to novels, cereal boxes, and electronic documents.

☑ The right to interact with others while reading, writing, or listening to a text. Interaction involves questions, comments, discussions, and other communications about or related to the text.

☑ The right to life choices made available through reading and writing competencies. Life choices include, but are not limited to, employment and employment changes, independence, community participation, and self-advocacy.

☑ The right to lifelong educational opportunities incorporating literacy instruction and use. Literacy educational opportunities, regardless of when they are provided, have potential to provide power that cannot be taken away.

☑ The right to have teachers and other service providers who are knowledgeable about literacy instruction methods and principles. Methods include, but are not limited to, instruction, assessment, and the technologies required to make literacy accessible to individuals with disabilities. Principles include, but are not limited to, the beliefs that literacy is learned across places and time, and no person is too disabled to benefit from literacy learning opportunities.

☑ The right to live and learn in environments that provide varied models of print use. Models are demonstrations of purposeful print use, such as reading a recipe, paying bills, sharing a joke, or writing a letter.

☑ The right to live and learn in environments that maintain the expectations and attitudes that all individuals are literacy learners.

Drafted by:
David E. Yoder, Karen A. Erickson, and David A. Koppenhaver,
Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, October 1997
http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/lit2k/LITBR.htm
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9.3 A Charter of Rights

A Charter of Rights

AS AN ADULT WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AND AS A CONSUMER OF SERVICES, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

☑ Be treated as an adult human being

● be treated in a fair way ● be treated with respect ● not be teased, called names or hurt in other ways ● have friends ● go out and have fun ● have someone to love ● get married ● have children ● take care of my own money ● have control in my own home

☑ Laws that protect me (like the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)

● not be discriminated against for things like being female or male, the country my family comes from, my skin colour, my religious beliefs, who I choose to love or my disability ● get fair wages ● get the same things as everyone else who does the same job (for example, coffee and lunch breaks, medical benefits, vacation time and maternity leave) ● get the same medical services and care as other people

☑ Make informed choices and decisions in my life

● make decisions and choices based on my feelings, beliefs and what is important to me ● be told enough things to help me decide (make an informed choice) ● take chances (risks) once I know what might happen ● decide what I do on my own time ● decide what I do with my own things ● decide how I plan for my future (what goals I set and what I want to talk about when I plan) ● choose to live on my own or with others ● decide who comes into my home ● choose the services I use ● have choices when I use services, including where I live, who I live with, what I eat, what changes happen in my home, what work I do, when I go to the bathroom, what doctor I go to, what my doctor does to me, and many other things ● make mistakes ● change my mind ● decide to stop using a service ● choose when I need support

☑ Support

● get help, if I need it, with things like finding a place to live, making a budget and learning what I need to learn ● have staff and other supporters (like family and friends) who treat me nice (kind, polite and with respect) ● have supporters who are helpful ● not be told off by supporters ● hear good things, not just bad things, about myself from supporters ● have enough money from the government to buy the services and support I need ● get help with making decisions (from my guardian and others), if I need it ● get help with taking care of money (from my trustee and others), if I need it ● have a say even if I need help making decisions

☑ Speak for myself and to be listened to

● speak my mind and give my opinions ● talk about my rights ● show my feelings ● make complaints if I am not happy ● say "no" ● disagree with people ● have people listen to me when I talk ● have people try to understand me

☑ Access

● get services in my community ● have good special (accessible) transportation, if I need it ● use seating for people with a disability on regular transportation, if I need it ● get around easier if I use a wheelchair (for example, ramps, curb cuts) ● be part of and have access to the community (things like jobs and recreation) ● go to school and to get the training I need to learn new things

☑ Privacy

● spend time alone, if I want ● have people get my O.K. to go into my locker at work ● have people knock or get my O.K. before they go into my room at home ● use the telephone without someone listening to what I am saying ● have the choice of going out without telling others where I am going ● have things my doctor knows about me be kept between us, unless I need help to understand

☑ Safety and protection

● feel safe when I use services ● feel safe when I am out in the community ● not be hurt, attacked or have my things taken from me ● learn how to take care of myself

☑ Good services

● have service providers I can count on ● be helped when it's my turn in line ● be given the same service as everyone else ● ask questions if I need to know more ● get a different doctor if I want ● ask another doctor to check what my doctor said (get a second opinion) ● have doctors and dentists explain to me (not just to my parents, staff and others) why I need to have something done, what it will cost and what will happen if I get it done ● say "no" to medical care once I know what will happen if I say "no" ● be treated gently if I get medical care

I ALSO KNOW THAT EVERYONE ELSE HAS RIGHTS, SO I WILL:

- Not do things that take away other people's rights
- Treat other people the way I want to be treated
- Be a responsible adult

Drafted by people with a developmental disability who use services,
at the *1994 Opening Doors Conference*, hosted by
The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI)
3304 – 33rd Street N.W., Calgary, AB T2L 2A6.
http://www.vrri.org/charter.htm
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9.4 Get Your Message Across

Janet Pringle of the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary wrote the following section about the importance of appropriate written materials for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The advice provided in her article will help you communicate better – in writing or otherwise – with these learners. The article also shows why literacy is so important for this learner population.

GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

Janet Pringle, VRRI

Introduction

For many people, reading is a baffling and humiliating ordeal, but it doesn't always have to be. It is time to challenge the myth that the harder something is to read, the more important it must be. We can turn this around and say that the more important something is, the more reason we have to make it easy to read.

Plain Language

Vast amounts of incomprehensible literature float past most of us. Banks, insurance companies, lawyers and government officials are particularly prone to producing "gobbledygook." However, people are now starting to complain and to demand information that is reader-friendly and accessible. This has been labeled the plain language movement. In the (re)habilitation field, we can apply the same ideas, except that our plain language must be even simpler.

If you think writing in very simple language is easy, just try it. Most people who write for publication are comfortable working with words and often have years of post-secondary education. They can only guess what is easy to read.

At the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary, we have developed a process to make written materials easier to understand. Let me tell you a little about it.

The First Stage

Suppose there is a need for an information pamphlet or a consent form or some other document that is intended for slower readers. First, I would collect the information I need for the document and write it as simply as I can. I make the size of the print large (usually 14 point) and I choose a plain font. The one you are looking at here is Garamond, which is a serif font. Times New Roman is another serif font. The letters in these fonts have little tails on them.

Times New Roman

I have found these fonts harder for slower readers, although this kind of font is usually recommended. I use a sans serif font (without the tails). Here is a sans serif font called Zapf Humanist 601 BT or Optima.

Zapf Humanist 601 BT

The Team

The next step is to meet with two or three people with developmental disabilities who will work as a translator team with me. A good translator is not necessarily someone who reads well – often it is quite the reverse. It is someone who is brave enough to speak up when she or he can't read or understand something and who will work respectfully with other team members to find clearer ways to say things. It takes practice, as well as a commitment to the process.

I try to mix and match translators in teams, so that there is a variety of reading levels. The translators know I employ them for their unique insights and contribution to the work. They are the experts in what they understand and they enjoy using their skills.

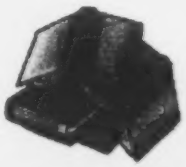
We read the prepared materials aloud. This can immediately show up some of the problems. I watch for puzzled expressions and listen for times when someone stumbles over a word. After reading each sentence, we talk about meanings. Sometimes things are clear. Often there are difficulties. If one translator can explain the meaning to another, I know for sure the first has understood and that explanation is often the best one to use. Sometimes it is my job to suggest alternative words. Then we choose the ones we like the best. The work needs a lot of concentration, so meetings are only about an hour and a half long.

Words and Sentences

I use the active voice (e.g., "Joe told me" not "I am told") and short sentences. I avoid abstract notions and keep meanings concrete, where possible (e.g., "don't steal" not "don't break the law"). Usually, though not always, the shorter the word, the better. It is all a matter of trial and error. Sometimes a word that has been changed by one team will be put back again by a second team. There is seldom a "perfect" choice.

It is worth remembering that readers will often recognize their own specialized vocabulary. People with developmental disabilities can usually read words such as 'developmental disability.' A different readership (e.g., people in an ESL class) will be familiar with a different vocabulary.

I try to find a balance between being too general and too specific. For instance, "beware of danger" may be too broad, but "beware of fire" may lead some people to assume that a gas leak is not a hazard and can be ignored.



Graphics

Next, the team members and I look at graphics. These can be very useful, but they are another form of 'language' and need checking, too. On one occasion, for instance, I showed several translators a stylized graphic of a doctor with a stethoscope listening to a man's chest. Most of them interpreted it as two men hugging. I avoid symbols; an example will explain. The 'remember' sign of a finger with a string tied around it is usually decoded as a finger with a string tied around it! Even the basic red circle with a diagonal line, meant to stop someone or something, has not always been taught to people with developmental disabilities.

As with the words, the aim with graphics is to find what the readers understand, not what I think they ought to understand. I have found the best pictures to be plain and uncluttered 'Dick and Jane' style. When I cannot find a good one, I do not use any.

Format

After the team meeting, I go back to my computer, make the changes and complete the formatting. The pamphlet is laid out clearly with plenty of white space, no words hyphenated over two lines, and not too many upper case letters. Sometimes I will make two or more pamphlets instead of squashing too much information into one. Often the changes in text, graphics and formatting mean we need a second or even third meeting. On those occasions, other translators also have input and may come up with even more good ideas.

Conclusion

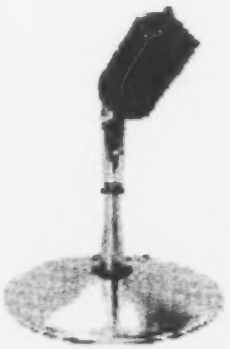
Everyone has the right to understand as much as possible of the world around him or her. The process I have described takes time, but the results show that we can create genuinely accessible information, both for those who read slowly and for support staff who need to explain things to non-readers. My advice is: know who your readers are, plan your words with them in mind, and, most importantly, check with the intended readers and listen to their ideas.

9.5 Addressing Literacy Potholes

Paving Our Road to Inclusion Directions 2000

Annual General Meeting and Conference of the
Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres
June 2 & 3, 2000

As part of the SARC *Support Inclusion!* Literacy Project, Cindy Crichton of C.C. Consulting in Olds, Alberta was invited to speak to our association about her experiences delivering literacy services to people with developmental disabilities. The session, entitled "Addressing Literacy Potholes," was well received by conference participants. The talk was interesting and challenging to the listeners, and touched on nearly every issue related to providing literacy services to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The text of the presentation appears below.



Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased to be here today. I have worked in the Rehab field for 10 years and when I started in Rehab, I thought that I had found the work that I was born to do. I loved the job, the responsibilities and, most of all, I loved the people that I would see every day. There were my colleagues, who I have always said were kindred spirits. In a job that sometimes did not pay much, the rewards were greater than money could buy. But most of all, there were the individuals that I worked with. They usually taught me more than I taught them. I secretly thought, "If my boss knew how much I loved this job, they probably won't pay me." I had no idea that 10 years later I would be standing here in front of such a large crowd talking about my experiences. But here I am... .

How I became involved in literacy with developmentally disabled individuals is a short and somewhat surprising story. One night while flicking channels on TV, an ad was on our community channel asking for volunteers for the one-to-one literacy program called *Project Read Soon*. I thought about many things when I had seen that ad. I wondered what one-to-one volunteering meant. I wondered what type of people would be in a program like that. And I wondered why we would need such a program in our small community. Even with all the questions that I had, I still jotted down the number and called the next morning. The co-ordinator there was happy to get my call and told me that the next tutor training session would be the following month, so I signed up. I think that my real education started at those sessions.

You see, I was surprised to find out that I lived in a home where illiteracy was a daily occurrence and I did not know it. My Mom came to Canada at the age of nineteen and did not read, write or speak English. She taught herself to read and write English by reading the local newspaper. After 2 years in Canada, she married a local farm boy and he did all the writing for her. Oh, she still read the local paper, but she did not do any writing, for it was too difficult for her.

I remember seeing her have the store clerk write out the cheque for her and she would sign it and I remember her sitting at the dinner table while my father read letters out loud to the family, but I did not understand. That was just the way it always was in my family.

When my father passed away, my mom had four children under the age of fourteen to support, so she did the only thing she knew how to do and that was to be a cook. You see, she had cooked for years on the farm for all the farmhands and she knew that she would be able to cook in a restaurant because she could read words like hamburger, fries and eggs. I always wondered why my older sister would write notes for the rest of us for school and mom would sign them. I understood that day in tutor training. I understood that my mom had English as a second language and she had trouble with reading and writing English. I was twenty-eight years old.

My other surprise that day in tutor training was when I asked if people with developmental disabilities were receiving tutoring in literacy. The response shocked me and saddened me. I was told that 'those people' were not accepted into the program as students because they were different and needed specialized tutoring. I was also told that small, community based, volunteer programs did not have the resources needed to help those students. I am ashamed to say that even with my Rehab background, I took that as gospel and did not question any further that day. There is obviously a BUT to this story or I probably would not be here today.

The BUT is that when one of the other managers at work heard that I was volunteering with the literacy program in our community, she phoned up the co-ordinator and asked if the program would allow me to tutor an individual with special needs. The co-ordinator called me and wanted to know, since I worked with developmentally disabled people all day, would I still be willing to tutor a gentleman in the evenings twice a week for an hour. I agreed wholeheartedly and had her set up an assessment with him the following week so that he and I could get started.

One-to-one tutoring is a special relationship for both the tutor and the student. It takes time to develop and with time it grows. I did not want to jump in headfirst and scare this guy (I'll call him Patrick) away with homework assignments, reading and writing tasks and all those other things that would remind him of school. So I set up our first meeting, came in carrying a dictionary, a notebook and a medium sized journal. By the way, the dictionary was for me because I am a terrible speller and I was worried that if he asked me to spell something, I would spell it wrong. I sat at his kitchen table and we talked about his likes and dislikes, what his background was and what he wanted to do at our meetings. He did all the talking and I took a few notes.

When our hour was up, I handed him the journal I brought and I explained to him that this book was his and only his. He could do whatever he wanted with it and I hoped that he wouldn't just throw it away. I showed him that it was full of empty pages and he could draw pictures in it, colour in it, or maybe write his name in it. Whatever he decided was fine with me. I would only ask that I be able to look at it when I came to visit, if he thought it would be okay. I was not sure what would become of that journal but I found out at our next session.

When I came in for our second meeting, Patrick was there, holding out his journal for me to see. On the first page he had printed in big black letters, "PATRICK." He was very proud of his book and he wanted me to put my name on the bottom of the page where he had put his name. So I wrote "Great, Patrick!" and signed my name. I didn't know it then but that was to become a ritual for our lessons – each time I came, he would pass me his journal, I would find the page he wrote on and I would write "Great, Patrick!" and sign my name.

Our second lesson proceeded. I thought that words that were important to Patrick would be the words that we would start working on because they would have more meaning for him. So I asked Patrick to tell me ten words that he would like to learn. Well, I had my first lesson in non-judgemental tutoring that day. How many of you are thinking about swear words? Well, it wasn't a swear word. The first word he wanted to learn was Nigger. It was the name of his horse that he rode at Special Olympics horseback riding. He proceeded to tell me that he won many trophies riding that horse and he was very proud of their accomplishments. I struggled with writing that word, though Patrick kept telling me to write it down. I thought of the ethics and morals of teaching such a word to him but I had to put aside these feelings because to Patrick this word was the name of his horse – no more, no less. We went on to nine more words like Mist (the name of a beluga whale that he and his sister sponsored in California) and Ferrari (the car he wanted to buy) and other words that meant something to him.

I have to tell you that the first word that Patrick learnt was the name of the horse that he rode. That horse became the main character in many of Patrick's stories later on as he told about his close bond with the horse and how the two of them were a team and won those trophies together. I tell this story because as literacy tutors or workers, we must be aware of our own biases, ethics, morals and reasons that we are there. We are only there to assist or to be a conduit for someone to learn through, we are not there to make the student learn what we think or we want the student to learn. Patrick did not know the derogatory meaning of the first word he wanted to learn, he only understood that it was the name of his horse – his friend – and I had to accept that.

By the way, once word got out that Patrick was accepted into the literacy program, that literacy co-ordinator was swamped with requests for tutors for developmentally disabled students. In the first six months, there were fifteen students on a waiting list, waiting patiently for a tutor.

As you can see, there were some struggles that first year for both me as a tutor and for the literacy program. I was now tutoring two students and still working forty hours a week. Every time a new student with a developmental disability registered with the program, the literacy co-ordinator would call me and ask, "I don't suppose you would be willing to tutor another student would you?" As much as I wanted to, I knew that I would not be able to do justice to the process, as I was getting busy.

Just as much as the literacy co-ordinator called me, I hounded her for information on tutoring developmentally disabled learners. She kept telling me that I was doing fine (Patrick had his first re-assessment and had went from below a grade 1 level to a grade 3 level in one year). I was happy for Patrick but that was his accomplishment. I still wanted more information but the literacy co-ordinator told me there wasn't any information out there. Well, that wasn't good enough for me, so I started going to every conference I could, to take sessions on 'learning disabilities,' 'the right brain thinker,' 'learning with colours' – any session that I thought would give me information on tutoring developmentally disabled students. After every session, I would leave feeling frustrated but more determined to find that information. I started to do research on my days off, calling everywhere from New York to Dallas and from Vancouver to Halifax trying to track down literacy techniques.

The information started coming in:

- Statistics on how people with disabilities and low literacy skills live in poverty with low pay jobs or no jobs at all;
- Literacy information on how people with disabilities and low literacy skills have difficulties getting the proper medical and health care.
- Government information on how people with disabilities and low literacy skills need self-advocacy skills to attain more government funding.

But nowhere was there information on how to correct these problems. Nowhere was there information on how to teach literacy skills to developmentally disabled students. It was then that the literacy co-ordinator of our program said to me, "You develop teaching strategies. You have been working with students and are being successful, start writing it down." As they say, the rest is history.

During those first struggles, something else was happening. Something changed inside of me. I worked in the field that I loved but I was changing my focus in my job. A passion was growing in my soul – a passion for literacy. Not just literacy but literacy with developmentally disabled learners. I started to question the way Rehab services were delivered. Why was literacy training not part of teaching life skills? After all, is not being able to read and write one of the most basic skills needed to reach independence? I started to question the literacy organizations. Why were the community programs not open to developmentally disabled learners? Were they not also part of our community (locally, provincially and nationally)? I knew the way to change people's thinking was to offer training and training is what I set out to do – not only for myself but also for anyone that was interested.

After two years of watching the list for developmentally disabled students grow, I was so frustrated. I didn't have the time to one-to-one tutor everyone on the list, so I started looking for a group type lesson plan. Again it was the literacy co-ordinator that came to my rescue. She was offering training in a technique called 'Reader's Theatre.' When I called her to register, she told me that the training was for the tutors that were working with English as a Second Language (ESL) students and she did not think that this training would help me in my search for information. Well, I won. I took the training with the other tutors and wow, I struck gold. I realized that utilizing Reader's Theatre in a group setting would enable students on the one-to-one waiting list to come to these sessions and practice reading and writing by using scripts. It would be a new, fun and exciting way to include everyone in literacy.

Let me tell you about Reader's Theatre. It is the art of storytelling. Like the old radio plays, the participants use only their voices to portray a story. There is minimal acting needed and only the voice and / or sound effects tell the story. There is no memorization needed, as the scripts are taken onto the stage and read out loud. The participants learn to read and recognize words through the repetition of the script material. "Practice, Practice, Practice" was the motto of the group. Scripts can be developed for all levels of readers so that a beginner reader can read beside an advanced reader – everyone is included.

Our group started out in 1991 with seven participants and two tutors or directors. Scripts became the focus of learning. Each of the participants was given a part in a script and that became their learning tool. New words were identified and looked up in the dictionary. The title of the script would give clues as to the story line and discussions focused around the question, "What do you think will happen?" The script would also be used for identifying sequencing, comprehension and emotion. The director would encourage the student to develop his or her character by identifying what emotion was being portrayed and by asking how the character would sound if he was happy or sad. The participant would also be encouraged to develop some action (if the moment called for action). For example , if a character was talking about being cold – he might shiver. As time went on – and word of mouth spread about the fun 'theatre' group that was started – more students came forward.

After the first year of Reader's Theatre and practising scripts over and over again, we ended our first year with a wind up barbecue. It was at that barbecue that the students took control. A few came up to me and said, "Now that we have practised our scripts, when do we perform?" Well, that opened my eyes. They were completely right. I knew that one of the organizations that gave services to people with developmental disabilities was having an event that could use entertainment. I approached them and they agreed to let us perform.

Our first performance was short – with only three scripts being performed – but what a success! Parents were so proud, staffs were taken by surprise, but most of all, the students had accomplished their dreams. They were now a 'Literacy Theatre Group' and they had a mission. When we started up that second year, we grew from the original seven to a whopping fourteen participants. The first night back to a practice, the group decided to name themselves – 'Reader's Theatre Live' was born.

Since our focus now included literacy skills first and performances second, we broadened what we learned. We practised not only literacy skills, but we also practised theatre skills. Things like how to be a good audience, how to bow, how to sit or stand on stage, and how to enter and exit the stage were all part of the learning process. It made this a great learning opportunity that was fun and not just a literacy learning tool. We tried to practice every possible scenario that may happen on stage. The bows that were perfected were impressive!

As news travelled about a theatre group being available for entertainment, we started getting bookings. First it was through agencies in our community and then we performed for the Chamber of Commerce. From there it just blossomed until we were giving four or five performances between September and April. We were accomplishing this on a budget of $50.00 per year!

We decided that we could raise money with our live performances, so in the third year, we set out to have a year end performance. It was a two hour production. We had members from the community, other students from the literacy program, staff people, family, and friends working back stage, making props, working on sound effects and generally getting involved. The night of the big production saw eighty people in the audience. What a great opportunity for everyone! We had planned a half time break for refreshments, so that the performers could visit with the audience. We received great reviews. Since that time there has been four more productions.

During this time, all of us were learning – me included. I was reminded during one practise that I must not assume that everyone understands the meaning of a word that I thought was a common word. The word in question was "bloomers." The gentlemen that had to read that word would stumble every time he came to it. He had practised his lines for weeks and both he and I were frustrated over the trouble he was having. I couldn't understand what the trouble was with the word "bloomers." Finally, I said to him, "Brian, don't you know what bloomers are?" He smiled and said "No, what are those things?" I told him that bloomers were underpants that old ladies used to wear. Well, he laughed for about 5 minutes but he never had trouble with the word "bloomers" again.

Another revelation came to me during another practise session. It was always me or another tutor directing the group working on a script. We would always encourage the participants that were not in a particular script to be a member of the audience to practise things like sitting quietly and clapping appropriately. On this night, after I had directed a group working on the script, one of the young ladies (who was "practising" being an audience member) came up to me and asked why I had set up the stage the way I had. I told her I thought that the group would look good all sitting in chairs in a nice straight row. She said she had a better idea and went about moving the chairs around – having a few performers stand and a few sit and she moved the narrator over to where the side of the stage would be. She said, "There, looks better." A light bulb came on in my head – sometimes I am slow to catch on. I asked her if she would like to direct the script we were working on. Her face lit up and she took over. That was the first night we used peer tutoring in our practices. After that night, we started to pair up readers of different levels to work with each other – sort of like a support team.

One of the techniques we used at the start of every session was a tongue twister. We used sentences like; "Bobby bought a box of budgies." These had a two-fold purpose. The first use was to build in success. As most people – even non-readers – will recognize their own name, I would develop a tongue twister for each reader. The second use was to help individuals pronounce certain letters. Sometimes if a person has a speech impediment, trying to learn phonics is very difficult. Tongue twisters enable the learner to practice making specific letter sounds. If I knew a specific person was having difficulties with a certain letter, I would develop a tongue twister using that letter. As you can imagine, I am now fairly good at writing tongue twisters! A participant reads the tongue twister and then the director asks, "What letter are we working on?" The participant identifies the letter and then the director asks, "What sound does that letter make?" The participant then makes the sound of that specific letter. For example, "B" makes the sound "buh."

One success story using tongue twisters came as a complete surprise. We had a gentleman who I will call George, come to Reader's Theatre practices every week. He did not participate because staff felt that he would not be able to follow directions. He rarely made eye contact and rarely spoke to anyone. You see, George lived in a group home with four other individuals. All of his roommates came to Reader's Theatre and staff there had arranged for him to come and watch. Ralph had been coming to Reader's Theatre practices for three years to watch. One night, during the tongue twisters practice, a lady read the sentence, "Sandy smelled the sickly slop." And I asked, "What letter are you working on?" The lady sat for a minute thinking and out of the back of the room I heard a man say, 'S'. I turned in the direction of the voice and there sat George looking directly at me. I asked, "George what letter are we working on?" And, still looking at me, he answered, "S." I had shivers and the whole room was completely silent. I walked toward George and asked, "What sound does that make?" He was still looking directly at me and he said with a smile, "SSSSS."

That was the first night George participated after three years of attending Reader's Theatre. That was about three years ago, and this spring George performed an oral presentation of Reader's Theatre at the Kiwanis Music Festival. His group won First Class Honours for their presentation. I still get shivers when I tell this story.

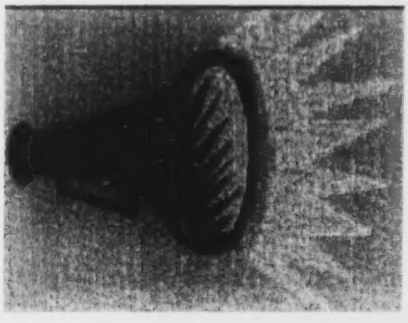
Sometimes we, as literacy workers, have to remember that everyone will learn in their own time. Just keep opening those doors to learning opportunities and one day the person will decide to go through that door. To George, learning to recognize the letter 'S' and to make the sound of 'S' took what we would consider a long time – about 3 years. But I believe that it didn't take 3 years for George to learn the letter 'S', it just took 3 years for him to decide that we were okay and that he wanted to participate.

As I said before, "Practise, Practise, Practise" was the motto of our group. We practised reading, we practised being an audience, we practised tongue twisters, we practised sight words and we practised phonics. We also practised having the participants decide on any movements their characters in a script would do. I thought that if we practised, there would be no surprises for anyone when we were on stage. You can imagine my surprise when one of the participants decided to put in more movement in a live performance than we had practiced. 'Reader's Theatre Live' had been asked to go to Edmonton to put on a live performance for an inclusive elementary school. It was a great opportunity for the Olds performers. It validated their dream of being more than a literacy group – they were a literacy theatre group and were ready to show off their stuff!

The school shut down classes for the afternoon. Young students filed into the auditorium and sat on the floor waiting in anticipation. We were ready! The first script we planned to do was about cows getting loose from the barn. The main character is supposed to be so shocked that he faints. Well, you guessed it! Just as the narrator said, "Young Danny up and fainted," the man playing the part of Danny fainted to the floor. The other participants snickered, the narrator burst out laughing, and I jumped up on the stage to see if the gentleman on the floor was okay. Within seconds, we all realized that he was ad-libbing and so the skit continued. That is why our motto remains the same today – "Practise, Practise, Practise."

During our fourth year of tutoring the Reader's Theatre group, another director and I were trying to find some script material that was both reading level and age appropriate at the same time. During our discussions about this problem, I commented that since most of our readers came from a farming community, it was too bad that we could not find scripts written about farm life. Using materials that are directly related to a person's life gives a great comprehension level boost and, through that, an easier time reading and understanding new words. The other director told me that I had a great idea, but I wasn't sure what she was talking about.

At our next group session, she took half the class, about ten students, gave them a topic for a story and told them to tell her what they thought would happen. The title was "The Night the Cows Got Out." As one person told her what happened next, she would write it down and then another person would carry on the story. This went on for the full session and at the end of the evening, she told them that they had just written a story. She took the story home and put it into script format.



The next session saw the group read through the script. I think that the director was shocked when, after the group read through the script, they critiqued it and told her what changes to make. Well, that poor lady ended up re-writing that script about ten times before the authors were happy with it! We spent the better part of a winter practising that script, and when the Kiwanis Music Festival ran in the spring, guess who was performing that script in the oral presentation part of the festival! When the group won the 'Adjudicator's Special Award for Script Development,' I don't know who was prouder that night, the director or the performers. I just want to add that the group that wrote that script using the director as a scribe were all non-readers. Now that was a great triumph!

I believe that we should adapt the program for the needs of the readers, and not have the readers adapt for the needs of the program. I went looking for ways to include alternative communication techniques in scripts that we could incorporate into the program, so that even people that were non-verbal or had a severe speech impediment could come to Reader's Theatre. I found one script that had a signed part using American Sign Language. Well, one script is not enough, so I started writing our own. I was again surprised, as all the participants wanted the 'signed' parts because they all wanted to learn to communicate with our signing participants. As I said before, this group of wonderful individuals was teaching me more than I was teaching them.

After volunteering with this group of amazing people for 8 years, I turned over the program to a group of new directors. I am still involved, as I write and develop scripts for them. I still get invited to all their live performances and their year-end barbecues. When I see some of the students downtown, I still hear, "Hey! There is the Reader's Theatre lady! Hi!" Over the years, I have watched this group of seven grow to an amazing twenty-eight people. Some were shy at first and didn't want to read. Some were born entertainers and wanted to read at every opportunity. Some were there because their friends were there and some were there because they wanted to learn to read.

Over the years, I watched and learned. I watched the joys of someone learning to read his own name. I watched the struggles of someone losing their reading skills to Alzheimer's. I watched the pride of someone who learned to express himself in words instead of in anger. I watched and I learned. I learned about myself. I learned that the world of words whether spoken, written, signed or pictorialized was the world that I belonged in – a world that includes literacy and students with developmental disabilities. It is a world that takes a person for what and who they are, with no pretence or prejudice, no judgement or pre-conceived notions. The only thing that is ever asked is to try your best and if you do that – then you will always be a winner!

9.6 What Do You See When You See Me?

Carla Roppel, who is the Communications Co-ordinator with the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL), wrote the following article for *Dialect*, the Association's award-winning newsmagazine. It challenges us to examine how we relate to others, and how we understand ourselves.

WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU SEE ME?

Carla Roppel, SACL

A man whose name is Francis asked me, "What do you see when you look at me?" I told him what I saw: a dark haired, short, well-proportioned 30-something man who wears glasses and who works for McDonald's. I didn't add my final thought, which was that Francis was also "a person with Down syndrome." I didn't feel, I don't know – right – to add those words.

That was several months ago. I didn't ask myself why I hadn't added those last words until after I saw a documentary about people who have made the choice to live together as intentional families.

These are unrelated people who choose to live together. They choose to be a family with each other. The family flexes every now and then as one member leaves and another enters. But the family adjusts and moves on. Together, they experience the day-by-day joys and challenges of living with each other's full humanity. Some days are good and some are not. But they are committed to working it through.

In *Becoming Human*, Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche movement, reflects on his experiences of living with and loving people with intellectual and other disabilities. Between the book and the TV show, I was led to question my own attitudes. Why did I not say to that man, to Francis, that one of the ways I saw him was as a person with Down syndrome? And more importantly, why did I not ask him, "What do you see when you look at me?" I wonder if what happens to me also happens to him. If I ask an acquaintance what she sees when she sees me, she'll list several characteristics, I'm sure: good sense of humour, loving, absent-minded. But I can guarantee that the list will not include the word obese.

L'ARCHE CANADA

But clinically, that's what I am. In fact, I'd be considered grossly obese. But it's not who I am. For some people, it's the first thing they see about me. And they judge me for it. I recognize those people even before they speak. It hurts. Is it the same for you, Francis? Or maybe it's not the judging that hurts; it's the sentence. All the words and characteristics that go with "fat": Dumb, gross, lazy, out-of-control, self-indulgent, jolly, good humoured. You've probably got some of your own. Do we do the same thing to you, Francis?

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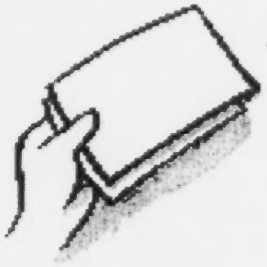
I know a few things about you, Francis. You love country music; Brookes and Dunn are or were your favourites. You really liked Suzanne Somers when she was here last year and want something in *Dialect* about her life. You are proud of your work, and it shows. You like belonging to People First. You love to bowl, and from the sounds of it, you're a lot better at it than I am. But I don't know you, Francis. What really matters to you and for you? What gives you joy? Brings you pride? Hurts your feelings? Damages your soul? What do you dream of? What are you afraid of? What would you do with a million dollars? These are the kinds of things friends talk about, but they aren't the kinds of things we've shared.

I wonder if I thought that I wouldn't know how to be friends with you. Or that it might be harder being friends with you than with some others. But Francis, I was wrong. I was starting with the judgement and the sentence, not with you. The person. And among all those things you are, you're also a good teacher.



Source:

Carla Roppel, "What Do You See When You See Me?"
Dialect: Newsmagazine of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Spring 2000, p. 16
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Afterword by Richard Lockert

Francis Schaan, the man from the article, is forty years old. He and I first met while he was attending (and I was volunteering with) a literacy group sponsored by READ Saskatoon. The sessions were held at the main branch of the Saskatoon Public Library. We bumped into each other again at an Annual General Meeting of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL), held at the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa in Moose Jaw.

We arranged to meet at his workplace after one of his Wednesday afternoon shifts to talk about his literacy experiences. Francis tells me that he was simply focusing on improving his reading and writing. After the literacy group was discontinued, Francis was matched with a tutor to work one-on-one. His most recent tutor was named Darrel, but he had to return to Regina for school. They used to meet once a week on Wednesdays. Francis has been waiting for a new match for two months, which he feels is too long. Francis is quite frustrated.

I also learned more things about this man. Francis moved to this restaurant about a year ago. He would like to challenge more people to get jobs like he has right now. In September, Francis will be celebrating 20 years at McDonald's. He is now active with an organization called People First, and is becoming a dedicated self-advocate. He attends regular meetings, and is learning about human rights. Once he was an enthusiastic fan of the World Wrestling Federation, but doesn't like it anymore, since Owen Hart died in an accident. He lives in a group home with several others, and likes to walk on warm days.

Francis is a friendly man with many interests. I really enjoyed our visit.

To learn more about Francis Schaan:

"So You Love to Read?," *The Newsletter: The Membership Newsletter of the SACL*, Vol. 26 (February 2000), p. 7

Karin Melberg Schwier and Dave Hingsburger, *Sexuality: Your Sons and Daughters with Intellectual Disabilities*. Toronto: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, 2000, pp. 149-150.

9.7 The Mind

Creating the Landscape for Inclusion
Directions '99

Annual General Meeting and Conference of the
Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres
June 11 & 12, 1999

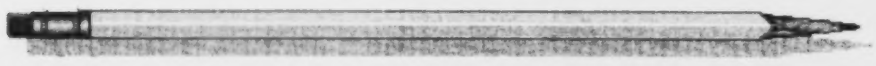
As part of the *SARC Literacy Needs Project*, we invited two speakers to our Annual General Meeting and Conference, held in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The afternoon program on Friday, June 11, 1999 was called "Painting with All the Colours of the Rainbow." It featured speakers addressing the topics of The Spirit, The Mind, and The Body.

The panel discussion for the topic of The Mind focused on the role of literacy in the lives of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The panelists were Richard Lockert, Sandra Busch, and Lee Tavares-Jakubec.

Richard Lockert, SARC Resource Developer, was primarily responsible for the *SARC Literacy Needs Project*. In addition to hosting the panel session, Richard was one of the speakers. He discussed SARC's current and future literacy initiatives.

Sandra Busch, a literacy learner and a self-advocate involved with People First in her home province of Manitoba, related her personal experiences with building her own literacy skills. She was also featured in the short video segment that was shown during this presentation.



Lee Tavares-Jakubec is the Coordinator / Facilitator of the Agassiz Independent Learning Centre (Beausejour, MB) and the Springfield Literacy Project (Dugald, MB). Over the past five years, Lee has also worked and volunteered with agencies / organizations which primarily focus on individuals with intellectual disabilities. Lee Tavares-Jakubec has also had the opportunity to work as a Program Manager of an adult group home and has held a seat on the Board of the Association for Community Living – Manitoba.

Lee Tavares-Jakubec was born, raised and educated in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She holds both a B.A. degree and a B.Ed. degree. For the past 12 years, she has worked in the educational field. Her teaching experiences include alternative educational programs for at-risk students, early-years education, and adult education.

Lee strongly believes that everyone has the ability to learn and that the focus should be on ability, not on the disability.

In her presentation, Lee Tavares-Jakubec discussed some of her experiences with developing and implementing literacy programs for adults with intellectual disabilities in both community sites and in sheltered workshop environments. The text of her presentation appears below.

(...) I am currently the coordinator / facilitator of two literacy / basic education programs in Manitoba. The program I'll be speaking about this afternoon is the Agassiz Independent Learning Centre. This program is a community-based learner / student-centred literacy program. It is an inclusive program with 61 students, 14 students with intellectual disabilities. The program is located in the community's public library. It is run by a volunteer board and is representative of community businesses and organizations. The program has been in operation for nine years and in those nine years, five of those years it has run as an inclusive program.

Basic literacy was important yesterday, but it is extremely crucial for surviving in today's world and the future. Thousands of Canadian adults with intellectual disabilities feel that their reading and writing skills are not good enough. People with intellectual disabilities face particular challenges in this new world. Many people cannot read and write because people felt that they were thought to be unteachable. Because of this idea, many developers of literacy programs and resources also have been dismissed. Things are beginning to change, but slowly, and literacy courses are given in a variety of different places, including libraries, community centres, workplaces and schools.

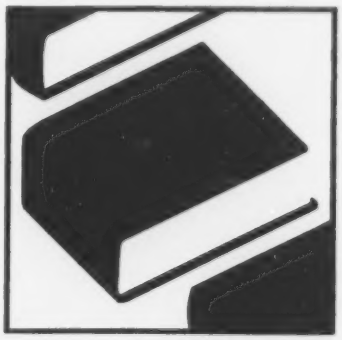
Different programs have different ways of teaching literacy. Our program has been shown to operate in one of the most successful ways, and that is, the program involves the individual student to choose what he or she wants to learn. This approach is called a student- or learner-centred approach. Studies have shown that learner-centred programs are best at including people with different abilities. Students have indicated that a learner-centred approach helps them personally because they feel empowered, they feel they have control and they have choices.

Inclusive programs encourage learners to direct their own learning so they can do the following:

- Build their self-confidence;
- Participate more freely in society;
- Work towards empowerment; and
- Reach their personal goals.

How will you determine if a program is inclusive? Inclusive literacy programs have the structures and volunteers who believe that everyone can learn. They will work towards providing and creating an environment that is safe and friendly-feeling. Learners are supported to make choices and are encouraged to make choices based on their own interests, and they are encouraged to learn about their own life experiences and use those experiences as teaching tools.

The program that I am currently working in, we believe that everyone can learn, that learning and teaching requires you to know the person first, their gifts, their abilities, and then build on their self-confidence. It also believes that goals can be set and that small steps can be taken to reach these goals.



An inclusive program will also provide learning resources that have meaning to the learner. We try to provide books and materials that are written in the plain language format, that reflect the learner's life. We have material that includes stories on sheltered workshops, Special Olympics, and most importantly, we use learners' own stories that reflect their own experiences.

When assessing students in our programs, we acknowledge the fact that tests can be scary to many of our learners. Many of our learners have had some difficult time when they were going through school, so we try to avoid tests. But in order to determine where our students are, we need to have assessment. So we developed assessment tools which are designed to assess the student's ability first, but also to assess what type of barriers there may be, such as physical disabilities.

Our program also provides training to tutors and this is really important. As I mentioned before, I am the only instructor of a program of 61 students, but we have about ten volunteers. And our volunteer tutors are what make the program successful. We feel that we need to provide the training so that they can learn to be sensitive about issues facing people with disabilities. Many of our tutors have come into the program not having been in contact with individuals with intellectual disabilities and we make that a part of our training. We provide training on specific teaching tools that have proven successful and we provide opportunities for our tutors to also share their experiences with one another.

And we assess tutor-learner relationships to ensure mutually rewarding relationships are developed. We encourage our students to step forward if they feel that they are not happy with the person they are working with and if they are not comfortable with that person.

We use many modes of instruction, including language experience writing, reading material compatible with students' interests, computer-assisted literacy, including the SARAW system, reading material appropriate to the learner's goals, and assisted or paired reading (which is what Sandra and John demonstrated in the video). We develop experience by doing outings, so that students may experience other things that can be a part of their life. And we build these lessons in their own community, so that they would feel a part of that community.

Even as a program that has been inclusive for a number of years, we still have run into many barriers.

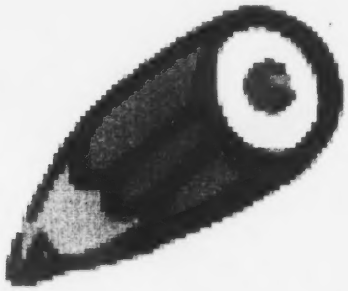
The biggest barrier that we run into – and I heard that there were some funders here, so I'll be very gentle – are the funders. Our major funder in Manitoba is the Department of Education, who is still unsure of their own policies and how they affect adults with intellectual disabilities and their right to education. Our program has, at times, been threatened with loss of funding due to our inclusiveness. It's something we've worked out, but it's something that we face every year. The second is training. Training is very limited. Training on topics of literacy and individuals with intellectual disabilities are limited. The resources are limited. We need to develop resources at a local program level. Community acceptance has also been an issue. Some individuals (not many but some) refuse to attend the program because of its non-exclusiveness.

We have struggled with each of these above-mentioned barriers and feel we have succeeded. We have shown some wonderful results for all of our students, including those with intellectual disabilities. People have reached their goals one step at a time and sometimes it takes two or three years of literacy before we see any progress at all. We have managed to break down many of the barriers in the community and also in the political world.

Other community agencies have developed partnerships with us and we are currently in the process of training front line staff of our local sheltered workshop with a level one tutor training certificate. The training will allow further literacy training to take place in that environment. The training that we're providing front line staff for ACL-Beausejour, as mentioned, is the level one tutor training, and funding was made available through Literacy Partners of Manitoba and ACL-Manitoba. We are hopeful that, with that training, front line staff will be able to do literacy programming in the group homes, in the environments, in job searching programs to enhance what we are currently doing.

In closing, I would just like to review what I feel are the major components of a successful inclusive program.

- **Individualized Methods of Instruction and Use of Appropriate Resources:** That is a very important point and it took me a long time to figure that out. The material that we are using with our students needs to have meaning to the students that are using the material and it also has to have meaning within that community. And many of the resources that we work with talk about taking subways. Well, we don't even have a subway in Winnipeg, let alone in a small, southern Manitoba town! So, we really have to establish our own materials and we've had to use a number of our students' stories as material our students can read.
- **Supported Instructors and Tutors:** We need supported instructors and tutors. We've been very fortunate that our tutors in our program are wonderful.
- **Opportunities for Tutor Training and Support:** We are working towards that, but it's still difficult. As I mentioned before, the training available for literacy and individuals with intellectual disabilities is extremely limited.
- **Provisions of Supports to Increase Accessibility:** We try to do our best. We are wheelchair accessible. We work with people with disab lities, not just a disability. We try to accommodate people with physical differences that may make it harder for them to be in a normal classroom. So we try to adjust our program based on the individual.



- **Flexible Approaches to Evaluation:** We evaluate our students on an individual level. We don't have an assessment for one student, we have sixty-one different assessment packages that assess the goals of the students and whether they are reaching those goals.
- **Outreach, Leadership, Awareness:** We do outreach and linking with other community organizations, business and other social agencies. And we feel that we need strong leadership and we need to build awareness.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for allowing me to share my ideas with you....

9.8 How I Got into Literacy

Marlene Dray is the Coordinator of Employee Support Services for the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC). She provides assistance to employees of SARCAN, the recycling division of SARC. Marlene previously worked as an Activity Programmer at Gravelbourg Bon Ami, Inc. She also has a degree in history from the University of Waterloo.

HOW I GOT INTO LITERACY

Marlene Dray, SARC

I was at a Trade Fair one autumn. The local Community College had set up a booth to share information about upcoming programs. One of the signs was for a "Tudor Workshop." I am a big fan of history and I particularly enjoy reading about King Henry VII and King Henry VIII and the Tudor dynasty in England.

I asked the Community College Coordinator about this course. She talked about the need for volunteers to work with individuals who wanted to improve their reading and writing abilities. She went into great detail about this workshop and that it would teach volunteers to work with individuals on their literacy skills. I listened quietly and after she was finished I thanked her very much for her information and pointed out that the word for the workshop should be "Tutor," and that "Tudor" was a royal family that had ruled England many years ago.

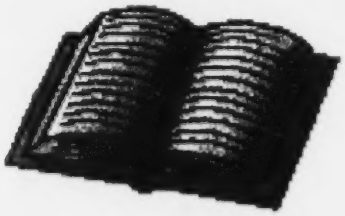
I felt a little guilty for pointing this out to her and I signed up for the workshop. I spent two days with a group of other volunteers learning teaching strategies. When we were finished the course we were told that a local Rehabilitation Centre was looking for volunteers to help people with their reading and writing. It was suggested that I volunteer there.

I was quite nervous at the thought, since I had not had any experience working with people with challenges. I did commit to working with one young gentleman for 1 – 2 hours a week. Everyone was very welcoming and he was excited about spending some time with me. We started with the very basics – the alphabet. We practised faithfully every week and finally, after several weeks, he was able to write the alphabet all by himself. We celebrated by sharing our success with everyone else at the Rehabilitation Centre and then going out for coffee.

We used some workbooks to work on vocabulary but "Experience Stories" seemed to work best for us. He would choose a photo from a newspaper or magazine and then tell me the story. I would then write it and we would read it together. Flash cards and fill in the blanks helped him learn the words.

Progress was slow but we were patient and enjoyed our time together. By the time we had finished working together, he was able to read a few more words and write the alphabet. That was success for him.

I was eventually offered a part time position at the Rehabilitation Centre and over the years I was able to work with other individuals who wished to improve their reading and writing abilities. It was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. Isn't it funny how a misspelled word led me to my career of working with individuals with special needs?



Section 10

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Section 10

Bibliography

10.1 Introduction

Here is a list of helpful reference materials, primarily on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The reference materials are listed according to the following main categories: Awareness, Literacy, Web Sites, Online Documents and Computer Software.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A symbol appearing before each entry indicates the medium of the particular reference material. The symbol code is as follows:

	Computer Software
	Online Document
	Videocassette
	Web Site
	Printed Material

Appropriate resource listings also appear in the Assessment and Literacy Activities sections of this *Handbook*.

10.2 Awareness

This part of the Bibliography lists works that shed light on the experiences, personal views, and everyday lives of people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Having some perspective on the learners you will be working alongside can only make your tutoring better and more effective.

AWARENESS

And Then Came John. Sausalito, CA: Telesis Productions International, 1987.

A colourful portrait of the triumphant life story of John McGough, from his birth with Down Syndrome through societal rejection and prejudice in urban America – to his rebirth as an artist, musician and much loved personality in the warm and accepting cocoon of a small community on the Northern California coast.

Angela Novak Amado, Ph.D. (ed.). *Friendships and Community Connections Between People with and without Developmental Disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 1993.

This enlightening resource sensitively explores the extensive and mutual benefits of friendships between people with developmental disabilities and other community members. Highlighting practical ways to use natural social connections as the foundation for building successful friendships, this book examines various issues such as work and leisure relationships, community programs that nurture friendships, gender-related expectations, and religious considerations. From an overview and history of understanding relationships between people with and without disabilities to personal accounts of the friendship-building process, this guide is designed to foster and enhance full community participation. An inspiring reference for individuals with disabilities, families, service providers, professionals, and advocates in the field of disabilities.

James Brodie Productions, *Just Friends*. Toronto: James Brodie Productions.

Just Friends uses friendship as a vehicle to illustrate the mutual value of being in relationship with a person with an intellectual disability. It explores how friendships can be instrumental in leading a person who is labelled out of social isolation and into meaningful involvement in the community. The friendships profiled in this video develop outside of typical family and institutional settings. *Just Friends* has aired on CBC national television and received the Special Jury Award at the Yorkton Short Film Festival and a Bronze Plaque at the Columbus International Film Festival.

Jennifer Stephen & Margot Francis. *Becoming Friends, Becoming Allies: Best Buddies Canada Training Manual*. Includes the video *Becoming Friends, Becoming Allies*. Toronto, ON: Best Buddies Canada, 1998.

Founded by Anthony Kennedy Shriver in the United States, Best Buddies is an international university and college based volunteer program designed to promote friendships between university and college students and adults with developmental disabilities. Incorporated as a registered charity in Canada in 1995, the organization has since grown to 30 chapters in six provinces, involving some 800 volunteers. *Becoming Friends, Becoming Allies* is intended to provide you with information, activities and resources to assist you in your role as a facilitator with Best Buddies. This manual will challenge readers to look at the ways in which societal attitudes enable separations and inequities between groups. The first chapter introduces the Best Buddies program, explains the term "intellectual disabilities," and examines the effects of various kinds of discrimination and labelling. The second chapter suggests ways to think of advocacy as a basis for friendship. It will also take up some of the specific issues at stake in friendships between people labelled with disabilities and non-disabled people. The third chapter provides a series of activities which help us to think critically about our friendships. Chapter four concludes with suggestions of practical strategies.

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien. *Members of Each Other: Building Community in Company with People with Developmental Disabilities*. Toronto, Inclusion Press.

This book is stories about working with people with developmental disabilities. But it is the same message for all of us. This book exposes the danger of power, of isolation, of helplessness. It also challenges and gives hope for communities to take back control from the 'professionals,' to themselves. It has tried and true tools to help to build the future. This is a 'must read' for anyone working in this field. It's also a great read for anyone who wants to be a fuller human.

Karin Melberg Schwier. *Couples with Intellectual Disabilities Talk About Living and Loving*. Rockville, MD: Woodbine House, 1994.

This book explores a subject we are not used to hearing about – people with disabilities and the quality of their intimate relationships. In this collection of lively interviews, fifteen couples talk about their relationships, revealing their deepest feelings, hopes, and desires. Conversations are unedited for grammar and style to preserve individual mannerisms and personality. Each interview is prefaced by a short biography of the couple, and accompanied by their photograph. These candid portraits give parents and service providers the courage and incentive to allow – even encourage – similar, close relationships for their children and clients.

Magnus Family. *A Family Love Story*. Mayne Island, BC: Alea Design & Print, 1995.

This is the story of the Magnus family of Saltspring Island, BC. Focus is on the one son, Brad, an individual with a disability who achieved his dream of becoming a dancer.

Metropolitan Association for Community Living, *As I Am: Portraits of People with a Developmental Handicap*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Association for Community Living (OACL), 1989.

As I Am profiles the stories of three young people with a developmental disability. They speak for themselves instead of being spoken about. They talk about their lives, problems, hopes and dreams. The program is hosted by television actor David McFarlane who has Down syndrome. The video presents simple guidelines for relating to people with this disability. The video is designed to trigger discussion among teens, parents, and counsellors in this field, and it succeeds in challenging assumptions held by many viewers. It was awarded an Honourable Mention at the Columbus International Film Festival, has been broadcast on CBC Television and received a four star rating from the Video Rating Guide.

Norman Kunc and Emma Van der Klift, *A Credo for Support*. Nanaimo, BC: Axis Consultation & Training, 1995.

This powerful four-minute video is set to music and offers a series of suggestions for people who care about and support someone with a disability. It prompts viewers to question the common perceptions of disability, professionalism and support. It is designed for use in presentations, in-service, staff training, and orientation programs. This video can be a provocative catalyst for a dialogue on these issues.

Ontario Association for Community Living. *The Road You Take is Yours.* Toronto, ON: Ontario Association for Community Living (OACL), 1994.

This inspirational video is about self-planning and goal setting for people with intellectual disabilities. Featuring self-advocates, their family members, friends, and staff, it is the first video of its kind in which people with developmental disabilities tell their own stories about how they reached for and achieved their dreams. The video calls upon people with disabilities to see themselves as the agents of change. The community support professional becomes a guide who helps the labelled people state their goals, become aware of what options are available and to build a network of support. Individuals and support networks may use this video to demonstrate how dreams and goals can be achieved and to inspire self-planning exercises. It can be used as a seminar and to demonstrate person-centred planning concepts, or for public awareness at service clubs and other gatherings.

Program Development Associates. *I Belong Out There!* Syracuse, NY: Program Development Associates (PDA).

This video is an irreverent, entertaining look at recreation, friendships, and natural supports. Loaded with great ideas and real-life examples, it covers natural supports, recreational opportunities, helps motivate people to seek out friendship through community activities. Clyde has hit rock bottom. Like too many others with developmental disabilities his isolated home life has left him a "couch potato" ...bored, demoralised, cut off from the community. Then one day while watching TV, he meets the "Clyde" he could be: a gregarious, gungho fellow living life to its fullest out in the community, enjoying the same recreational opportunities as any other citizen. This funny interaction leads Clyde to realise how recreation can lead to new friendships and a new sense of community belonging.

10.3 Literacy

This part of the Bibliography lists works directly related to literacy for people with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The summaries are more general than for items listed in the Assessment and Literacy Activities sections of this *Handbook*. Some of these works are available through the Internet, and therefore are also listed in the Online Documents segment of this Bibliography.

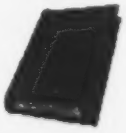
LITERACY

A New Understanding of Literacy. INSIGHT. Winnipeg, MB: Videon Cable 11, May 3, 1998 (Air date).

This video is an episode of the INSIGHT television program produced by Videon Cable 11, a local television station in Winnipeg. This episode focuses on the topic of literacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Conducted in a talk show format, practitioners and learners discuss the issues, and relate their experiences. Some scenes are on-site, providing practical examples of successful instructional settings.

Angela Tessier and Carolyn Buffie (Eds.). *Homemade Literacy Ideas: Recipes for Success!* Winnipeg: Association for Community Living – Manitoba, June 1993.

In the course of a literacy project conducted at the Association for Community Living – Manitoba, it quickly became apparent that textbooks didn't have all the answers to our literacy needs. However, tutors and instructors have, over the years, developed some wonderful ideas and strategies by using very simple "ingredients" in the home. This document is a compilation of some of those great ideas.



Cindy Crichton. *Reader's Theatre for the Mentally Challenged.* Olds, AB: Project Read Soon (The Mountain View Society of Alberta), 1997.

Project Read Soon of the Mountain View Society of Alberta offers a "Reader's Theatre Handbook" for the mentally challenged. It is a literacy learning tool, that includes teaching strategies and scripts. The handbook is the product of a project funded by the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) from March 1996 to March 1997. Reader's Theatre provides literacy opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a group setting. This approach uses only a small number of volunteer tutors. This is an advantage, since it is sometimes difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of tutors to work with individuals with special needs.

Catherine Janossy. *A Needs Survey & Program Description: Program Delivery for the Developmentally Channelled Adult in Grey, Bruce and The Georgina Triangle.* Walkerton, ON: The Walkerton & District Literacy Council.

In 1992, The Walkerton & District Literacy Council set up a formal classroom program specifically for developmentally-delayed adults. This program has been very successful and other organizations have shown an interest in implementing similar programs. As a community The Walkerton & District Literacy Council saw a need to evaluate the existing programs currently offered to this target group in Grey / Bruce, outlining the different methods of program delivery. Through this research, they hope to develop a curriculum for working with developmentally-delayed adults, and train practitioners to work with this special needs group.

Christina E. van Kraayenoord (Ed.). *A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities.* Brisbane: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, The University of Queensland, 1992.

This report is organized in 3 volumes. Volume 1 comprises an overview of the project, an executive summary, and conclusions and recommendations. Volume 2 contains the literature reviews, results of studies and questionnaire surveys, and the 5 special project reports. These projects focus on providing literacy services for people with intellectual disabilities in Australia. Volume 3 has 32 appendices, divided into 3 sections. Many of these appendices focus on sample materials used in the 5 special projects.

Christina E. van Kraayenoord. "Literacy for Adults with an Intellectual Disability in Australia," in *Journal of Reading*, Vol.37, No.7 (April 1994), pp. 608-610.

This article discusses the state of adult literacy for people with intellectual disabilities in Australia. Integration in regular schools, transition programs, supported employment options, and the benefits of literacy instruction for this population are discussed. Some of the research work of the Schonell Special Education Research Centre at the University of Queensland is reviewed. The literacy service providers serving people with intellectual disabilities in that country are also discussed. Reading materials and resources and other issues are outlined in this article.

Darlene Stevens and Terrie Moar. *People Reading Series*, including *Instructor's Manuals*. Selkirk, MB: Continuing Education Department, Lord Selkirk School Division, 1995.

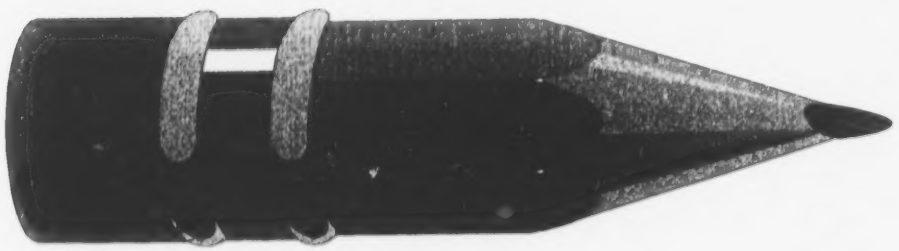
This is a series designed for people at beginning reading levels and has materials for adults labeled with a mental disability. It was also created for integrating into adult literacy programs that include people with a variety of skills. Instructional techniques and activities to develop specific skills are provided. The use of photographs of people in everyday situations makes this an approachable book for tutor and learner. The series contains four learner books, each accompanied by an instructor's manual. The four titles are *People Like to...*, *People Spend Time with...*, *People Live in...*, and *People Work at...*.

Darren Crawford and Angele Hubert. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*. With *Facilitator's Notes* by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders. Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Literacy Association, 1995.

Two developmentally disabled PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association learners who work at Edmonton Recycling Society (ERS) authored a photo-story. They describe the challenges they face both in their work and in developing reading and writing skills. The learners presented this work at a national conference, and one of them wrote an article for the Edmonton Journal. The Facilitator's Notes, by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders, offer basic literacy strategies, activities, and exercises for teachers, tutor and parents who are assisting learners to improve their reading and writing.

Debbie Baker. *A Plain Language Guide in Reading, Writing and Math.* Kentville, NS: Partners in Employment Outreach, Spring 1998.

The Plain Language Guide is intended to provide the tutor / instructor with insight about the art of teaching adults labelled mentally challenged. It is a user-friendly, interactive and practical guide for anyone who uses it. The Plain Language Guide has five sections: (1) the screening and interviewing processes we use, (2) learner-written material to use in reading, (3) writing activities based on the reading material, (4) math activities, and (5) a working bibliography of materials relevant to teaching adults considered to have a mental challenge.



Denise Young and Janet Pringle. "Message Sent, Message Received: A Plain Language Approach to Communication," in *Rehabilitation Review*, Vol.7, No.12 (December 1996).

The authors of this article are staff members with the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) based in Calgary. They discuss plain language in terms of using words in such a way that they can be read and understood by people with very low literacy and comprehension skills, including people with developmental disabilities. The authors describe how they "translate" written documents into plain language, by employing teams of "translators" with developmental disabilities. Literacy is about communication.

Frances Shannon. *Teaching Basic Workplace Literacy Skills to Employees with Intellectual Disabilities: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Teaching Strategies.* Orange, New South Wales, Australia: Western Institute of TAFE, Orange College, 1995.

This is a practical guide to assist teachers and trainers to address the basic language, literacy and numeracy needs of employees with intellectual disabilities working in open industry or supported employment. It targets employees with low to moderate support needs who may have difficulties with print, with fundamental numeracy concepts and with some basic oral language skills. It is assumed employees can understand and respond to simple instructions and requests, and can make choices and participate in decision-making. The skill areas which have been selected incorporate a range of basic workplace literacy skills which are fundamental for "getting on" at work such as time management skills, occupational health and safety signs, understanding and verifying pay and leave details, and ordering and paying for a meal.

Frontier College, *Tutor's Handbook: A Guide to Student Centred Individualized Learning.* Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1997.

This is a guide for literacy tutors working with adults. It is full of practical suggestions for tutoring adults with literacy needs, and is based on programs delivered by Frontier College tutors. Specific strategies are included for people with intellectual disabilities.

Gerard Giordano. *Literacy Programs for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc., 1996.

Gerald Giordano, the author, is a specialist in special education and developmental disabilities at New Mexico State University. In this book, the author provides a developmental basis for literacy education for adults, and suggests criteria for diagnosing literacy in adults. He explains 6 programs for teaching adults with developmental disabilities to read. These are: (1) computer-assisted literacy, (2) skills-based, (3) whole language, (4) psycho-educational, (5) programs that employ children's materials, and (6) programs for functional literacy. The book has two appendices: "Appendix A: Materials for a Functional Reading Inventory, and Appendix B: Illustrations for Cued Reading Inventories.

Jean Bennet, Richard Jaccoma, and Lee Weinstein (eds.). *So Far: Words from Learners.* Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1997.

"So Far" is an inspiring story of struggle and triumph. Each of the eight storytellers showcased has overcome profound physical and mental obstacles to enjoy a productive and independent life. This inspiring group has conquered problems like cerebral palsy, epilepsy, substance abuse, poverty, broken families, and loneliness. Today they are readers, writers, speakers, lobbyists, salespeople, and volunteers. All have attended the Invergarry Learning Centre in Surrey, British Columbia. "So Far" is a moving chronicle of perseverance, humour, learning and friendship.

Judy Calvin and Kerry Duffy. *A Community Handbook on Developing a Literacy and Disability Awareness Training Program.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC), 1994.

This handbook is the product from the activities undertaken in the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres' (CAILC) National Literacy Initiative. The handbook has three central goals: (1) to outline the importance of issues related to literacy; (2) to outline some methods which will ensure that Independent Living Resource Centres (ILRCs) are accessible to consumers with low literacy skills; and (3) to provide a workshop model for ILRCs to follow in educating literacy workers about issues surrounding disability. This resource would be appropriate for a special needs literacy tutor training program.

Karen Dean, Laura Sargent, and Sandra Shaffer. *We're SOLD: Strategies for Overcoming Learning Differences.* Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools, Adult and Community Education, Spring, 1993.

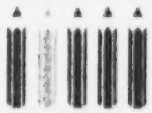
Teachers and tutors who are knowledgeable about learning differences and effective teaching strategies can assist adults to overcome these challenges. The goal is to increase teacher and tutor awareness and effectiveness in providing instruction to adults who have, or suspect they have, learning differences.

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Training Manual.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, September 1998.

The Literacy Preparation Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities (L.P.P.A.D.D.) came about because of a stated need by literacy practitioners and front-line workers and community staff who work with adults with developmental disabilities. These front-line workers / counselors wanted an early assessment tool to help them gain more knowledge about the literacy skills of clients / learners. The assessment tool, it was felt, would also be needed by clients to prepare them to enter a literacy agency or to further develop their personal literacy skills. In addition, the tool would also be used to assess barriers experienced by adults who wished to attend literacy programs. The resulting profile from the early assessment document would also be a major means to identify what information the literacy practitioner would find most useful to facilitate an adult with developmental disabilities in entering a literacy agency. This pilot project has been developed to present a package that may be used to help workers carry out a literacy assessment as well as faciliate involvement in literacy readiness training.

Kenneth N. Beck and Patricia Hatt. *Working with Learning Outcomes for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: The Toronto District School Board, October 1999.

This project examined existing literacy outcomes, conducted a literature search, and held focus groups with front-line literacy practitioners, adult learners and developmental workers and counsellors. The central purpose was to identify ways in which the "Demonstrations of the Learning Outcomes" could best enhance success for adults with developmental disabilities in literacy programs. Meanwhile, a major theme of the project was to maintain the integrity of literacy programs and to ensure successful literacy opportunities for adult learners' individual growth and progress. This document presents sample Demonstrations. It reports the results of the "Demonstrations of the Learning Outcomes" to organisations and individuals representing the fields of literacy and developmental disabilities.

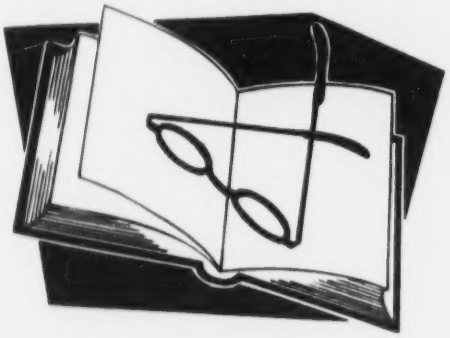


Literacy Council of Lincoln. *Training Manual for Tutors of Developmentally-Challenged Adults.* Beamsville, ON: Literacy Council of Lincoln, September 1994.

This manual was researched and compiled by professional staff, experienced tutors of special needs learners, and successful literacy learners themselves. It contains valuable guidelines for program delivery, hands-on practical advice and exercises, and helpful hints and examples. It includes teaching strategies for the learners, tips for tutors and lesson ideas. Professionals who work with "special needs" adults provide instruction on how to adapt materials and resources, deal with social skills and behaviour, communicate and develop a relationship with the learners.

Literacy Ontario. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998.

Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities reviews a sample of literacy programs successfully improving the lives of adult learners. The information collected in this study helps us to better understand the components of successful literacy programs. This can be a resource for the continued improvement of literacy programs. *Best Practices* research can be a useful tool in overcoming the barriers that continue to prevent adults with developmental disabilities from attending literacy programs. Through interviews with numerous exemplary program staff and their learners, this resource shines a spotlight on success. The stories of adult learners with disabilities reveal some of the real benefits of exemplary literacy programs.



Lynda E. McPhee. *"My Turn to Cook!"* Tisdale, SK: Cumberland Regional College Literacy Program, 1996.

This reading book and workbook are full of pictures and large print. The characters in the book are learners and their tutors in the Literacy Program at Cumberland Regional College. The photos in the book catch them at work, at home, and at their sessions with their tutors. The book follows them through the preparation of their favourite meal. If you are looking for Literacy Materials for low level readers that will be of interest to them and teach good food habits at the same time, you will find this a useful set. The accompanying workbook, "Good Foods to Eat," provides pictures and questions on Canada's Food Guide. The exercises in the book also have comprehension questions on "My Turn to Cook!"

Maureen Sanders. *Meeting Challenges: A Literacy Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1991.

The CHALLENGES Literacy Project was a two-year pilot project to examine the feasibility of using volunteer tutors to work with adults with developmental disabilities. Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, the project saw 20 adults matched with volunteer tutors who worked together in a learning centre setting. "Meeting Challenges" describes the results of this project. This is a useful resource which includes case studies and teaching ideas for programs that work with adults with developmental disabilities.

Moving Ahead: A New Handbook for Tutors Helping Adults with Learning Difficulties. Edinburgh: Community Learning Scotland (formerly the Scottish Community Education Council), 1995.

This is a revised version of a handbook originally published by the Scottish Community Education Council in 1978. New sections have been added. However, some sections have not been totally revised and employ out-of-date vocabulary ("mental handicap") and some out-of-favour perspectives. Nonetheless, this handbook contains useful practical tips on teaching basic skills, from home safety to going into hospital to using the telephone.

Patti O'Haire, Pamela Phillips, and Kathy Browers. *An Implementation Guide for* Beyond the Classroom*: Community-Based Instruction for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools.

The primary goal of Beyond the Classroom is to provide an effective education program for adults with developmental disabilities that will assist them to develop the skills necessary to successfully live and work in the community. This document discusses instructional strategies and teaching techniques for functional academics, which include knowledge of time, calendar, sight words, safety and community signs, and personal data.

Pinellas County Schools. *Bridging the Gap: Workplace Literacy for Developmentally Disabled Adults.* Boca Raton, FL: Florida Adult and Community Education Network (ACENET), 1991.

"Bridging the Gap," a Section 353 Demonstration Project, emphasises both on-the-job teaching and classroom instruction for developmentally disabled adults. Instructional focus is targeted on academic, social and independent living skills needed for successful job performance. This manual was developed to provide a detailed description of the project's components, how it was implemented, and a curriculum outline with sample learning activities.

Randal McIlroy (Ed.). *Beyond Words: The Book*. Winnipeg, MB: Association for Community Living – Manitoba, 1995.

In September 1995, people from across Canada converged on Winnipeg for Beyond Words, an event about literacy for adults with intellectual disabilities. Presenters offered examples of successful approaches. Self-advocates expressed their own trials and triumphs in finding personal paths to literacy. Teachers, parents and program directors shared their thoughts. Appropriately, discussion was everywhere; people talked and people listened. This book reflects that. In part, it is a guidebook to issues and ideas at the forefront of the literacy movement.

Roeher Institute. *Literacy and Labels: A Look at Literacy Policy and People with a Mental Handicap.* Toronto: Roeher Institute, 1990.

"Literacy and Labels" examines the accessibility of community-based programs, policy initiatives and program developments. It also looks at the experience of gaining literacy skills by people who have been labelled.

Roeher Institute, *Literacy, Disability and Communication: Making the Connection.* Toronto, ON: Roeher Institute, 1999.

Literacy is more than individuals acquiring numeracy and reading skills. A broader understanding of the issues makes the connection between literacy and people's relationship to society. This study looks at how policy and programs affect people's capacity to be recognised, communicate, and be fully included in society. It examines a wide range of policies, including employment, health care, education and justice policy from the perspective of a right to communication.

Roeher Institute. *Literacy in Motion: A Guide to Inclusive Literacy Education.* Toronto, ON: Roeher Institute, 1993.

This practical guide to the inclusion of people with intellectual and other disabilities in community literacy programs provides a variety of practical suggestions and strategies drawn from successful inclusive practices.

Roeher Institute. *Speaking of Equality – Making Literacy Programs Accessible to People with an Intellectual Disability: A Guide for Program Managers and Coordinators / A Guide for Tutors and Educators / Choosing an Inclusive Literacy Program.* Toronto: Roeher Institute, 1995.

These three manuals are part of the Speaking of Equality series on literacy and intellectual disability, with relevant training materials, strategies and problem solving. The manuals offer practical information to program managers, coordinators, tutors, and educators on how to make their services accessible to people that have been labelled with an intellectual disability.

Roeher Institute. *The Right to Read and Write: A Straightforward Guide to Literacy and People with a Mental Handicap in Canada.* Toronto: Roeher Institute, 1990.

This book is targeted to self-advocates. Being able to read is very important. It helps people learn and have more control over their lives. Often people who have an intellectual disability have not had the chance to learn how to read. This book talks about reading and giving more people the chance to learn how to read. Forward by Peter Gzowski.

Shelby McClintock. *Special Needs Training: Trainer Handbook for Volunteer Tutor Trainers.* State College, PA: Mid-State Literacy Council, 1994.

This document contains the final report, a trainer handbook for volunteer tutor trainers, and an idea book for volunteer tutors from a project conducted to develop a supplemental tutor training program and life skills curriculum specifically for developmentally disabled (DD) adult learners. The final report describes how assessment results, data from field observations of classes for DD adults, a survey of available adult education materials for DD learners, and interviews with tutors were used to develop a curriculum and tutor training program. The trainer handbook includes the following: training process overview, training agenda, sensitivity exercises, text and workbook suggestions, support services to assist volunteers, and miscellaneous forms. Described in the idea book are 49 activities grouped into the following categories: pre-reading; reading; writing; speaking and listening; math, measurement, and money; self-esteem; and life skills.

Shelley Butler. *Learning About Literacy and Disability.* Toronto, ON: St. Christopher House Adult Literacy Program, 1991.

Learning about Literacy and Disability is a handbook about the experiences of learners who are disabled, and their tutors. It tells clearly how they work together in partnerships and in groups. It insists that people with disabilities must and can be integrated into the everyday life of a literacy program.

University of Kansas / Kansas State University, *Accommodating Adults with Disabilities in Adult Education Programs.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas / Kansas State University, 1998.

This resource is a collaborative effort among faculty and staff at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. The Accommodations Project has produced an Accommodations Notebook. The three-ring binder Notebook consists of five sections that include information on individual and programmatic legal rights and responsibilities and step-by-step procedures for accommodating learners.

Walkerton & District Literacy Council. *On the Road Back.* Walkerton, ON: Walkerton & District Literacy Council / Saugeen Telecable, 1995.

This 17-minute video was produced with the assistance of the Saugeen Telecable, the local community television station. It includes interviews with class participants and instructors of Adult Basic Education programs for the developmentally-challenged. Margaret asks the difficult questions. Tracy, Catherine and Shirley, drawing on years of experience in adult education working with developmentally challenged adults, give up reflections both painful and profound. David and Helen give us honest and charming evaluations of their experience in the classroom, their difficulties and goals. On site scenes both illustrate and broaden the scope of this picture. The video has been received enthusiastically and it is recommended for anyone in the field. It could be utilized, both as an instructional video and as a springboard for further discussion and exploration of literacy to the developmentally challenged adult.

10.4 Web Sites

The following web sites feature information on people with intellectual / developmental disabilities and / or on literacy.

WEB SITES

The Arc
http://thearc.org/welcome.html

The Arc (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States) is the country's largest voluntary organization committed to the welfare of all children and adults with mental retardation and their families. The Arc, with its rich history in advocacy and services, is comprised of individuals with mental retardation, family members, and professionals in the field of disability and other concerned citizens. The Arc has adopted various positions on issues that affect people with mental retardation and their families, and the organization's mission statement forms the basis for the organization's activities. The site includes several Fact Sheets on topics of interest.

ARIS – Adult Education Resource and Information Service
http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/language-australia/aris/

ARIS is a one-stop information service for advice and support on adult education, specialising in adult English language, literacy and numeracy. ARIS houses and maintains a resource collection, journals and journal readings, educational databases, networks and information sharing with a range of local, regional, state, national and overseas government and non-government organisations and services.

Center for Literacy and Disability Studies
http://surgery.mc.duke.edu/commdis/clds/

The mission of the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (CLDS) is to promote literacy learning and use in individuals of all ages with disabilities. It is the belief of the CLDS that disabilities are only one of many different factors that influence an individual's ability to learn to read and write and to use print throughout their life and across their living environments. All individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have the right to an opportunity to learn to read and write in order to increase and enhance their educational opportunities, vocational success, communicative competence, self-empowerment capabilities, and independence. Through research, development, and education, the CLDS assists people with disabilities in using print more effectively in their daily lives.

Centre for Communicative and Cognitive Disabilities
http://www.uwo.ca/cccd/

The Centre for Communicative and Cognitive Disabilities (CCCD) is a Canadian university-based centre of specialisation that was established in 1985 by the Secretary of State to improve educational opportunities for learners with communication exceptionalities. CCCD is dedicated to assisting learners with language and learning disabilities, deafness, and physical challenges to participate fully in society.

Dr. Randy J. Tighe Resource Centre
http://www.vrri.org/trc.htm

The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute assists people with disabilities to live with dignity and value as contributing members of their community and to make informed and responsible choices in all aspects of their lives. We are a non-profit, research and service agency offering residential, recreation, education, employment and community services. The Dr. Randy J. Tighe Resource Centre is the in-house library and information centre of the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute. It provides information resources in the area of developmental disabilities and rehabilitation; disseminates the research materials and training programs developed by VRRI staff; and provides basic audio-visual resources routinely required by staff.

ERIC Database
http://ericir.syr.edu/Eric/

The ERIC Processing and Reference Facility is operated for the U.S. Department of Education by Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC). The Facility performs a variety of support functions and services for the agency's Educational Resources Information Center program (popularly known by its acronym, ERIC). The ERIC Database is a bibliographic database covering education-related documents and journal articles from 1966-present. Syracuse University provides Internet-based online searching access to the ERIC database for the period from 1989-present.

INDIE – The Integrated Network of Disability Information & Education
http://www.indie.ca/

The Integrated Network of Disability Information & Education web site features a search engine and comprehensive directory of resources for products, services, and information for the world-wide disability community. Topics covered include adaptive technology; disability organizations; education (including literacy); employment; government housing; lifestyles; media; products and services; recreation, arts and culture; rehabilitation; resource centres and libraries; sites sorted by disability type; social development and legislation; and transportation. Originating from Canada, the site is available in both English and French.

InfoAbility
http://www.infoability.org

InfoAbility is an information and referral service for vulnerable adults and their supporters in Ontario. Adults are deemed "vulnerable" when their disability, medical condition, communication problem or advanced age makes it difficult for them to express their wishes and / or to act on them. The InfoAbility web site was developed to provide practical and useful information for vulnerable adults and those connected with them, be they caregivers, support workers, professionals or concerned friends. The site features a link to "Developmental Disabilities Print and Media Resources."

John Dolan Resource Centre
http://www.sas.shaw.wave.ca/~sacl/Dolan.HTM

The John Dolan Resource Centre of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL) provides up-to-date information on subjects related to people with intellectual disabilities, their families, friends, teachers, employers, service providers, advocates, support workers and others who care about creating more supportive, inclusive communities. The Resource Centre, named in honour of one of the founding parents of the Association, offers nearly 5000 items including books, reports, video and audio materials, journals, training kits, and information packages. A vast range of information is offered, from archival materials to the most current resources available including SACL-published materials.

J.P. Das Developmental Disabilities Centre
http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/INDEX.html

The Centre was established in the Fall of 1967 with a grant given to the University of Alberta by The Canadian Association for Mental Retardation; it was then named the Centre for the Study of Mental Retardation. Since 1987, it has been called the Developmental Disabilities Centre. Its current activities include: research, student training, publication, and selected clinical services for children and adults with mental retardation and other disorders that affect learning and originate in childhood. One recent research topic has been the nature and measurement of reading and writing disabilities. The Centre maintains a library of selected journals and books as well as laboratory and testing facilities. The Centre publishes a journal (semi-annually), Developmental Disabilities Bulletin.

L'Institut Roeher Institute
http://indie.ca/roeher/

The Roeher Institute is Canada's leading organization to promote the equality, participation and self-determination of people with intellectual and other disabilities. The Institute examines the causes of marginalization and provides research, information and social development opportunities. All Roeher Institute research is published and made available to the public. These books, papers, monographs and bibliographies are used for community development, public education and social change by consumer organizations, other community agencies and governments seeking new approaches to policy, programs and services. Research is also published in Straightforward guides that are illustrated and accessible. All of our publications are available in English and in French, and many of our titles are now being translated into Spanish.

Literacy Online
http://litserver.literacy.upenn.edu/

Literacy Online is cosponsored by the International Literacy Institute and the National Center on Adult Literacy and hosted at the University of Pennsylvania. This site serves as a guide to adult learning and literacy resources available on the Internet. It is dedicated to providing useful information concerning literacy for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners around the world.

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)
http://www.nald.ca/index.htm

The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. (NALD) is a federally incorporated, non-profit service organization that fills the crucial need for a single-source, comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible database of adult literacy programs, resources, services and activities across Canada. It also links with other services and databases in North America and overseas. Since its launch in 1989 and incorporation in 1992, NALD has been providing data, referrals, program models and much more, on virtually every adult literacy program in the country. It helps users to build on the experience and expertise of over 5,900 contacts and programs from Newfoundland to the Yukon, as well as around the world on the Internet.

National Center on Adult Literacy
http://literacyonline.org/ncal/

The U.S. Department of Education established the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) in 1990, with co-funding from the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. The mission of NCAL addresses three primary challenges: (a) to enhance the knowledge base about adult literacy; (b) to improve the quality of research and development in the field; and (c) to ensure a strong, two-way relationship between research and practice. Through applied research, development, and dissemination of the results to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, NCAL seeks to improve the quality of adult literacy programs and services on a nationwide basis. NCAL serves as a major operating unit of the Literacy Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

National Institute for Literacy
http://novel.nifl.gov/nifl.html

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) – and its 4 Hub Projects – aim to advance the nation's agenda, emphasizing building public consensus and policy, monitoring programs, sponsoring promising initiatives, disseminating valid information on programs and research pertinent to literacy, and building interagency collaboration at the Federal and State levels.

PROSPECTS Literacy Association
http://www.om.ca/pla/

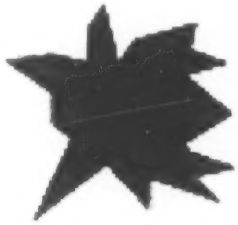
Prospects Literacy Association is a community-based, volunteer organization which is committed to advocating and providing literacy development for adults and families. Its activities enhance community participation and quality of life. As an established resource and learning centre, Prospects is recognized for its inclusive programming for adults with developmental disabilities. The Challenges Project was a two-year pilot project to examine the feasibility of using volunteer tutors to work with adults with developmental disabilities. Originally funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, the Challenges project was integrated into Prospects with the support of a Wild Rose Foundation grant. It continues with funding from Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development.

Province-wide Library Electronic Information System (PLEIS)
http://www.lib.sk.ca/pleis

The Province-wide Library Electronic Information System (PLEIS) is an Saskatchewan-based electronic network that links all types of libraries and provides online access to information and library resources. PLEIS makes it easier to share resources among libraries, especially in rural and remote locations.

Regina Public Library Learning Centre
http://www.rpl.regina.sk.ca/about/services/adult.shthl

This web site provides information on the adult literacy programming and volunteer tutor training offered through the Regina Public Library (RPL). The Learning Centre has extensive holdings of literacy resource materials in a variety of formats. The library's holdings can be accessed with a Telnet connection through this web site. Literacy resources can be borrowed for extended periods through inter-library loans.



Reg Peters Resource Centre
http://www.aacl.org/resource.html

The Reg Peters Resource Centre of the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) provides up-to-date information on subjects related to people with developmental disabilities, their families, friends, teachers, employers, service providers, advocates, support workers and others who support them. Over the years the Resource Centre has evolved into a vital community resource, offering a reference library of over 1500 items including books, reports, video tapes, journals, periodicals, newsletters, information packages, bibliographies, access to university and public library holdings and the Internet.

SIAST Kelsey Campus Library
http://www.siast.sk.ca/~kelcst/newlib/index.html

Kelsey Library exists to serve the academic, administrative and, to some extent, the personal needs of the faculty, staff, and students of Kelsey Campus. Members of the public are welcome to use materials in the library or may arrange inter-library loans through their public or regional libraries. For example, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's (SLN) Provincial Literacy Collection can be accessed (by SLN members) with a Telnet connection through this web site. SIAST Kelsey offers workplace literacy and adult basic education (ABE) programs which include people with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

UAB Civitan International Research Center
http://www.circ.uab.edu/

The mission of the Civitan International Research Center is to improve the well-being and the quality of life of individuals and families affected by mental retardation and developmental disabilities. The Civitan Center's activities are guided by a strong commitment to values that recognize all people first as individuals. We endorse full inclusion for individuals with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Individuals with disabilities and family members participate in all aspects of planning, service, research, and training at the Civitan Center. Through partnerships with consumers, professionals, organizations, and agencies, the Civitan Center seeks to shape policy decisions related to research and to increase the opportunities for inclusion, independence, productivity, and personal life satisfaction for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Civitan Center is part of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

10.5 Online Documents

More and more documents are being made available on the Internet. Increasing the amount and accessibility of this information is an important development. Some of the sites feature writing by learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities, information on assessment, as well as successful literacy strategies and activities.

ONLINE DOCUMENTS

Darren Crawford and Angele Hubert, *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*, including *Facilitator's Notes*, by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders. Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, 1995.
http://www.nald.ca/CLR/challeng/cover.htm
http://www.nald.ca/CLR/facilita/cover.htm

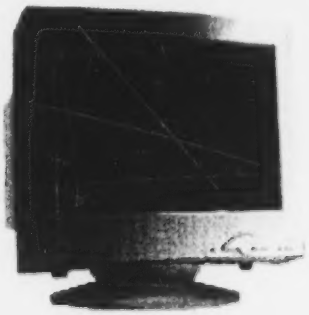
Two developmentally disabled PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association learners who work at Edmonton Recycling Society (ERS) authored a photo-story. They describe the challenges they face both in their work and in developing reading and writing skills. The learners presented this work at a national conference, and one of them wrote an article for the Edmonton Journal. The Facilitator's Notes, by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders, offer basic literacy strategies, activities, and exercises for teachers, tutor and parents who are assisting learners to improve their reading and writing.

Karen A. Erickson, David A. Koppenhaver, and David E. Yoder, *Literacy and Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL), 1994.
http://literacy online.org/ncal/pdf/TR9415.pdf

Review and synthesis of literacy research with adolescents and adults with three representative types of developmental disabilities (autism, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy). Discusses current social and legal influences on literacy research and practice. Points out research limitations, implications, and suggests directions for future research. This document is available as an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.

Literacy Ontario. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities.* Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/practice/practice.pdf

Across Ontario, successful literacy programs improve the lives of thousands of adult learners every year. Literacy programs touch upon all aspects of learners' lives, from job skills to self-esteem to community integration. *Best Practices in Literacy for Adults with Developmental Disabilities* reviews a sample of those successful programs. The information collected in this study helps us to better understand the components of successful literacy programs. In addition, the study data may be used as a resource for the continued improvement of all literacy programs in Ontario. This document is available as an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.



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Literacy Ontario. *Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process.* Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1997.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/goal/goal.pdf

Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process describes an initial assessment process to document what potential learners in literacy programs have already achieved and still need to achieve in order to reach specific goals. It gives literacy instructors a framework and a practical approach to an initial assessment option for unemployed and employed workers, as well as for other learners. It provides you with a broad framework for conducting an initial assessment and for creating an individualized training plan. The assessment process will help learners to shape their education or training paths, regardless of the deliverer.

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD). *Practitioner Resources.*
http://www.nald.ca/clr/pracres.htm

Practitioner Resources offers various links to literacy materials such as manuals, booklets, guides, project reports and other material useful to any of those working in the field of adult literacy. Documents cover initial assessment, ongoing assessment (including portfolios), learner evaluation, volunteer tutoring, and literacy theatre. There are manuals for the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) program, which has proven very helpful for many learners with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Ontario Ministry of Education. Special Education Monographs, No. 3: *Exceptional Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities.* Special Education Branch, August 1986.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/monog3.html

This monograph has been prepared to assist secondary school teachers in developing courses of study for, planning lessons for, and teaching exceptional pupils with mild intellectual handicaps. The following areas are addressed: (1) structuring a pupil's learning program; (2) organising the school and the class; (3) encouraging reading and literacy skills; and (4) promoting a positive self-concept and social skills.

Ontario Ministry of Education. *Planning for Independence: A Support Document for Teachers of Students with Intellectual Disabilities*, 1990.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/planindep/planindep.html

This document has been designed to: (1) help classroom and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and school board personnel develop individual programs for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities; (2) assist teachers in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies to meet the needs of learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities; (3) assist teachers in evaluating the progress of learners and the effectiveness of their programs; (4) provide information and direction for curriculum development in subject areas; and (5) facilitate the process of integrating learners with intellectual disabilities into school and community.

PROSPECTS Shadow Series
http://www.nald.ca/CLR/Shadow/prospect.htm

Several PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association learners who are developmentally challenged chose professions or jobs they wanted to learn more about. These adults "shadowed" and interviewed people in those jobs, then wrote about their experiences in a series of seven books. This project was funded by The Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation. In *The Drawing Lesson*, Lyle Atkinson is thrilled to meet and discuss art with his favourite artist, Robert Bateman. In *Making Mousse at the Mac*, Cindy Gent describes her experience as a gourmet chef at a local hotel. In *Rings, Watches, and Me: My Day at a Jewellery Store*, Sherrill Jeffery goes behind the scenes, also serves customers, during her day at a jewellery store. In *Touchdown!*, Curtis Krupnik job shadows Damon Allen, his favourite football player. In *On the Air with K97*, June Lo describes her behind the scenes look at life at a local radio station. In *Des and the Dolphins*, Deserie Sherbo job shadows at the dolphin aquarium in West Edmonton Mall. In *Meeting Anne Murray*, Louise Symans learns about being a singer when she meets her favourite singing star.

Richard Lockert, *Inclusive Literacy: Annotated Listing of Resources Appropriate for Learners with Intellectual / Developmental Challenges.* Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC), 1999.
http://WWW.NALD.CA/fulltext/sarc/cover.htm

This document was one of the main products of the *SARC Literacy Needs Project* (1998-1999) of the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres. Primary funding was from the National Literacy Secretariat. This resource catalogue lists appropriate literacy materials and resources for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The listings include detailed summaries and purchasing information. The entries were chosen based on recommendations of SARC's membership and literacy practitioners, as well as on research of the existing literature.

Robert Collie. *Getting Along.* (The New Start Reading Series). Toronto: East End Literacy Press, 1985.
http://www.nald.ca/CLR/newstart/getting/cover.htm

This attractive series of six books is designed for beginner level adult readers. Each page is set in large type and illustrated with black and white photographs or line drawings. *Getting Along* is a charmingly illustrated book, which gives the candid account of Robert Collie's experiences in a sheltered workshop and his desire to lead an independent life. The five other books can be described briefly. *New Year's 1960* is an exciting beginner's book. 24-year-old Hank hears a woman scream. Rushing to her defence, he tackles two men and earns a citation from the police. In *Raised Up Down South*, Lee recalls growing up as a sharecropper's son during the 1930s. He speaks movingly of bigotry, his great grandmother's love and how he became a top-ranked Canadian boxer. *Working Together*, which is in dialogue form, shows how members of a learning group overcame problems with banking, mail order and forms, by working cooperatively. *I Call it the Curse* is a simple and often humourous book on reproductive health, developed from a conversation between a Public Health Nurse and a group of women. *My Name is Rose* describes the author's inspiring story of her emerging from childhood abuse and a life on the streets to her present loving relationship and her ability to marvel at rainbows.

10.6 Computer Software

There are several advantages to using the computer as a literacy teaching tool. It offers necessary repetition, holds the learners' interest, offers visual, tactile, and auditory stimulation at the same time, and it helps learners to develop computer skills, which are important in the world today.

Computer-assisted literacy instruction should be used as a supplement to regular instruction – person-to-person interaction cannot be replaced. Some learners may have problems with their fine motor skills, making the use of a keyboard or mouse difficult.

The titles listed below have been recommended for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

SOFTWARE

SARAW (Speech Assisted Reading and Writing)
Neil Squire Foundation
Suite 100 – 2445 13th Avenue, Regina, SK S4P 0W1
(306) 781-6023 / (306) 522-9474
www.neilsquire.ca / neilsquire@cableregina.com

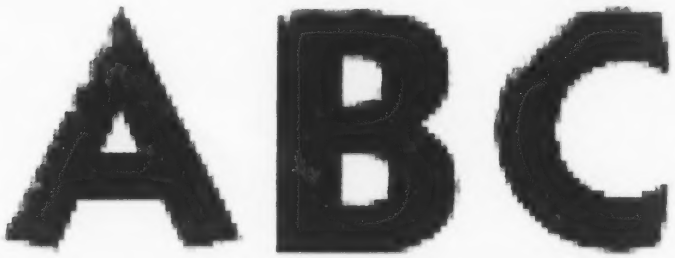
SARAW (Speech Assisted Reading and Writing) is a talking computer program designed by the Neil Squire Foundation to teach basic reading and writing skills to adults with significant physical disabilities who are non-verbal. The program developers designed SARAW for adults who currently read and write between the levels of grade two to seven. SARAW offers learners a set of activities to choose from, rather than a set of lessons that must be completed in a particular order. SARAW has three major components: Reading, Activities, and Writing. SAM (Speech Assisted Math) is a math program designed to compliment the SARAW program. It includes a Skills section, Real World, Games, and Math Magic. The SAM program assists adults to learn basic math in a classroom and real world setting. The system has also been successfully used with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. A version of SARAW is in development for use with Windows 95/98.

NEIL SQUIRE FOUNDATION
Education
Technology and
Career Development
for People with Physical Disabilities

The Alphabet (1995)
Virginia W. Westwood and Heather Kaufmann
Protea Textware, P.O. Box 49 Hurstbridge, Victoria, Australia 3099
+61 3 9714-8600 / +61 3 9714-8644 (Fax)
protea@mpx.com.au

The Alphabet is a program designed for new readers. The software program is divided into several sections: Capital Letters, Small Letters, Capital and Small Letters, Using the Keyboard, and Spelling. The first three sections begin with sound and recognition, followed by skill building, revision, and then a review of the skills acquired. The program is suitable for readers at the very early stages of reading. Simple and clear graphics are featured. Learners can progress at their own pace. Different learning styles are supported by the program's audio-visual features. Progress is gradual and most new learners can manage.

Source:
For more information, see the review by Lucy Scanlon in *TakeNote: Newsletter of Alpha Ontario*, Vol.3, No.2 (Winter 1998).



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Writing with Symbols (Widgit)
Widgit Software Ltd, 102 Radford Road, Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV31 1LF, United Kingdom
http://www.widgit.com/

The WIDGIT program (Writing with Symbols) for Windows is a system of communication based on pictures, and it was designed for people having trouble deciphering text. This is a word processing tool. Each word keyed in is promptly supported by an appropriate graphic. The continuum of learning guides learners through the writing process, from the non-reader level (very basic) to the independent level (no use of symbols). Some learners will adopt the symbols as tools of communication for use in lifelong learning, others will use the symbols as a bridge to learning and improving regular reading and writing skills. Eventually, the learner can become less dependent on the symbols and start remembering the spelling of words without any prompting. The contexts can be adapted to suit the interests of the adults using the program. Learners with the most basic skills can start by sounding out letters and words, learners with higher skills can write original paragraphs.

Source:

For more information, see the review by Lucy Scanlon in *Connect: National Newsletter for Technology & Adult Literacy*, Vol.1, Issue #3 (October 1997).

Reader Rabbit Series
The Learning Company / Mattel Interactive
1-800-358-9144
http://www.mattelinteractive.com

This series was designed for school age children. While the content and pictures are not age-appropriate, the Reader Rabbit Series has a reading method found to be effective with learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. The series is a best seller for its intended audience.

Source:
This software was recommended by the educational staff at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary.

Free Worksheets
http://www.freeworksheets.com/

This site allows you to download hundreds of free educational software programs. Phonics, math, reading, science, and social studies are featured. By experimenting, you may be able to discover programs appropriate for your learner(s) with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

The following software titles were recommended as instructional materials for adults with developmental disabilities by:

Patti O'Haire, Pamela Phillips, and Kathy Browers. *An Implementation Guide for* Beyond the Classroom*: Community-Based Instruction for Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Largo, FL: Pinellas County Schools.

Picture Cue Dictionary
Attainment Company, Inc., P.O. Box 930160, Verona, WI 53593-1060
1-800-327-4269

Survival Skills System
The Conover Company, 1050 Witzel Avenue, Oshkosh, WI 54902
(920) 231-4667 / (920) 231-4809 (Fax)
conover@execpc.com / www.conovercompany.com/